# THE SMART SET

*A Magazine of Cleverness*

*To Amuse, Not to Instruct*

THE WRONGED MAN

SHANGHAIED

THE HUSBAND INSPIRER

HAPPINESS

THE STRANGE CASE OF CHALONER

THE LOVERS

THE WRONG ENDING

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## OCTOBER 1918

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# THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS


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Editor—J. W. MILNE

OCTOBER, 1918


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# HOLD UP THE MIRROR TO THE MOUTH

## THE PAIN WE ENDURE—THE PENALTY WE PAY

By A. Ahumada

"FOR there was never yet philosopher that could endure the toothache patiently."

Every reader is, of course, familiar with the above quotation; but suppose we could all "endure the toothache patiently," the neglect would be still more prevalent, and what a catastrophe to humanity, what a motley lot we would be, what a dyspeptic, disgruntled, disagreeable assortment of human beings!

And would it be surprising? If the system is nourished by what we eat, if, by the process of mastication, we prepare our food for the stomach by grinding it into a pulp before swallowing, so that it may be digested and by the mechanical process of nature made to nourish the system, is it not evident that the entire body depends on proper mastication?

This being granted, if our teeth are decayed and painful, perhaps entirely gone, with what are we to masticate our food?

### The Great Majority

It is true that the science of dentistry has enabled one to replace artificially every tooth in one's head, and it is marvellous how many of us have permitted ourselves by dire necessity to be forced into this artificiality of teeth, simply because of neglect. It is tantamount to paying cent. per cent. interest per annum on a borrowed sum of money for a lifetime while able to repay the principal, but instead preferring to squander it wilfully on this, that, or the other.

It was Mr. Goldberg, of 27, New Cavendish Street, Harley Street, W.—one of the greatest exponents of bridge work, and one of the first to introduce this method to the entire satisfaction of his many patients—who prompted me, by his interesting observations on the care of the teeth, to argue thus with thousands of readers in need of such wonderfully skilled dental work as he practises. A master of his profession to the last word, I regretted the termination of my very short sitting, during which he revealed some of the wonders of dental science, and I wondered at the dilatoriness of the very great majority when it comes to the question of their teeth.

### The Penalty must be Paid

I thought then, and I think now, how and why it is that we are all so prone to suffer the penalty of lost teeth merely from neglect, when a few minutes, or even hours, of attention by such a skilful master of his profession, or any dental specialist whose services we may prefer, could have saved them.

False teeth are all right if we must have them, but why neglect the teeth until it becomes imperative to have them extracted and substituted by false ones, until so many are gone that a plate is absolutely necessary?

If, on the first appearance of a small cavity, the teeth are treated and filled, a great deal of pain, time, and money would be saved us, to say nothing of health, which is rapidly undermined by the existence of decayed teeth in the mouth.

Pain in connection with dentistry is a thing of the past, and there is no one who can prove this to the most sensitive, the most nervous individual better than Mr. Goldberg, of 27, New Cavendish Street, London. His personality alone is the greatest possible assurance of this. It assures one that he is a master of his profession, while his work is the best example of the progress in the science of dentistry, whether it be a painless extraction, filling a crown, a bridge, or—the inevitable and last resort of those who neglect their teeth—a plate.

We should all bear in mind that while we deny ourselves the comfort of sound and well-kept teeth we are also denying ourselves of perfect health, robbing ourselves of the nourishment of the food we eat, and martyring our stomachs, blood, and nerves. "Hold up the mirror to your mouth."

# SHORTAGE

## By H. Dennis Bradley

These are the days of shortage—of man-power, of matches, of gin—but chiefly of brains, which according to the meat rationing are offal.

* * * * *

And since there is shortage of brains there has, naturally, been little wool-gathering. Hence the wool-shortage.

* * * * *

To be serious—which is usually to be dull and uninteresting—the market-price to-day of the best class woollen materials is stupendous in comparison to pre-war time.

* * * * *

Were it not for the fact that Pope & Bradley had anticipated the market and so enabled by their position to more or less control the retail prices of clothes, it is no exaggeration to say that the price of a lounge suit to-day might easily have been twenty guineas.

* * * * *

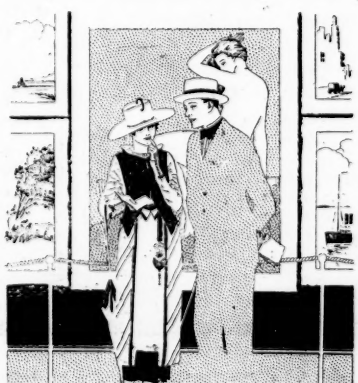
And if the war goes on for another year or two, since only an infinitesimal quantity of mufti material is being manufactured, this figure will eventually be reached.

* * * * *

We are cheerfully, if not drunkenly, paying about 400 per cent. more for our diluted whisky—which is a luxury, since we can easily exist uncheerfully on barley water.

* * * * *

Clothes are a necessity climatically and to modesty, and unlike the patriotic distillers, whilst apologising for their unwarlike spirit, the House of Pope & Bradley continue to avoid profiteering and to keep their charges within the borders of sanity.

*"A Summer Exhibition"*

*"Rilette's" picture is still apropos of nothing—nothing of the present, for the present has nothing to offer. The future is the only hope for the world—hence the mind wanders.*

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Always, this House has warned its customers well beforehand of the continued rise in the price of materials, and always, without profiteering, it has given them the full advantage of the purchases it has made in anticipation of the markets.

The prices for mufti are abnormal, in many cases over 120 per cent. increase on pre-war prices. With the nation in arms, the demand is insignificant, and the manufacturers' output has been reduced to the minimum, but with the advent of peace, and the inevitable rush for the freedom of mufti, the shortage will be so acute that prices will be prohibitive. British woollen materials are the best in the world. The manufacture is one of Britain's greatest industries. For a year or more after the war the export trade alone will require more than the entire output, and prices are bound to rise still higher.

Pope & Bradley, despite their principles, are powerless to control the woollen markets. They can only advise their clients to purchase their requirements now, before the prices of clothing reach ridiculous limits.

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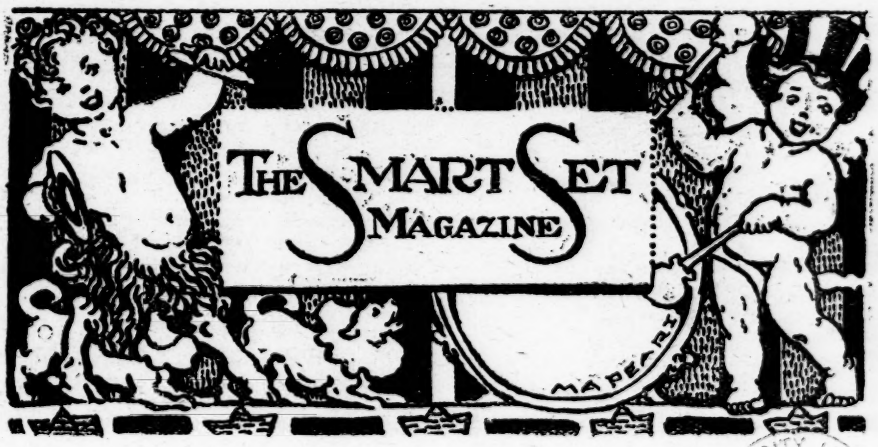


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# THE WRONGED MAN

By G. Vere Tyler

## CHAPTER I

THE broad brass bed, with its elaborate furnishings, stood in the glow from a pink lamp shade.

A young woman lay in the bed ill. It was plain to see that she was small of stature. Her face, lovely in the extreme, was unnaturally pale. Her eyes were closed. Her black hair spread over the pinkish white pillow as though flung there in a moment of agony or exhaustion.

A man was bending over her, staring at her forehead. He seemed never to have actually seen it before, and the beauty of its sculptured lines surprised him. She looked suddenly different to him, like a flower that had at last pushed its way out of tangled grass. The fringe of lashes on her cheeks and the fine pencilled brows were the only touches of shadow. She was exquisite thus. The eyelids, in the moment so perfectly screening the luminous eyes, were like golden wax.

Suddenly the man started. Over the tranquil face that had so unexpectedly hypnotized him he saw an expression of suffering that was like a veil. Already both cheeks and eyes were slightly sunken, and the chin, usually so round, had become pointed. The woman opened her eyes and caught his look of horror.

"You are afraid?" she whispered.

"Afraid of what?"

"Death!"

"You sent for me, Juanita?"

"Yes, I have something to—"

"You had better not talk!"

"I *must* talk! I am dying and there is something for you to know." She looked squarely at him with her now glowing eyes. "It is a confession, something that I think ought—"

"Juanita!" He lowered his face to hers.

She laid a feeble hand on his breast. "Wait," she said, "wait!"

For the first time her voice betrayed excitement. Her eyes closed suddenly and he noticed her laboured breathing. Presently they opened again as though to emit a flame. The flame passed into his own.

It was not the first time that this had happened. She had stirred him to the depths by it before. It was that flame-look that had caused him, a year ago, to marry her.

"Marcus!"

"Yes, Juanita?"

"You have never known me, the real me, and before I go I think you should."

"You must not fatigue yourself."

"Why? A few hours more or less don't matter. Sit down, I *want* to talk to you!"

Her words, a bit petulant, a bit wearied, were a command. He drew up a chair. His manner was constrained, anxious. His eyes hurried to hers.

"What is it you wish to tell me, Juanita?"

There had been little affection between these two, no endearing words, only his passion for her, and he never knew whether or not she responded to it—never once thought or cared to know. He had married her for his own sake, not hers. He saw women like that—as purchases and possessions. He knew that Juanita knew she was a purchase. She had a clever way of talking at times, said cutting things that left him no doubts.

"First," she answered him, "I want you to know that I am not afraid to die. Not that I don't fully realize all the horror of death, especially when I'm so young, but for another reason. I've always been afraid to live!"

"Why," he bent a little in her direction, "have you been afraid to live?"

"Because I knew some day the real me would trip me up. I have always lived a double life, even as a child. What was open, above board, what the world saw, was only acting. You won't be surprised then when I tell you that the baby wasn't yours. It is dead now and I am dying—and you ought to know."

She had a coughing spell and the nurse entered quickly.

"You had better go," the nurse whispered over her shoulder. "She *would* send for you, but it was very bad for her."

He rose and walked over to the door. Juanita was still coughing. He waited until the spell was over and she was lying quiet, with her eyes closed just as when he had entered.

The nurse fled past him on the way for brandy. He stopped her in the hall. "Is there any hope of her life?"

"Barely a chance, Mr. Schuyler, but we are doing our best!"

He turned and walked aimlessly in the direction of the stairway. At the head of it he paused and stood looking down the broad red carpeted steps. Then he turned and walked to the door of his own bedroom, opened it and entered. There he stood looking about him. Presently he walked over to the centre table, took up a cigar, lit it and then stood with it in his hand as if he had forgotten it. It went out. A little later it dropped to the floor. He undressed himself quite mechanically, and when his pyjamas were all properly buttoned and tied, got into bed.

As if his mind had suddenly ceased to act, he fell into a profound sleep.

## CHAPTER II

At two o'clock he was awakened by a knock.

Arousing himself, he went over, opened the door and faced the doctor.

"What is it?" he asked. "Is she dead?"

The doctor clapped him on the shoulder. "Dead!" he exclaimed. "A miraculous change for the better! The fever is gone, her pulse is good! With no setbacks, there's a good chance for her to get well!"

"Get well?" repeated Marcus, half dazed.

"Yes!" The doctor laughed as though Juanita had decided to live on account of him. "I'm sorry to have disturbed you, but a I couldn't leave without bringing you the good news! And now, get back to bed; you're as white

as a sheet. I don't want another patient on my hands. Good-night!"

"Good-night," said Marcus.

When he heard the front door close and the sound of the doctor's car moving off, he walked over and touched a button that flooded the room in brilliant light. His pyjamas were of purple silk and the doctor had spoken the truth: his stern set face was whiter than any sheet, it had the hue of marble. He looked like a statue of Hercules in a purple light.

It was a difficult problem. He faced it as one faces some strange abnormality. He wondered if just such a situation had even occurred before. He sat before it, sat before Juanita's confession, as a physician before some strange and hitherto unheard of ailment.

It pleased him to go back to the first time he ever saw Juanita. She was disporting with insolent grace in the chorus at the Winter Gardens. On that night he was beside a conventional woman of old New York, and some months before he had asked her to be his wife. Up to that hour he had been a slave to business and the conventions of such society as he knew. Women had figured in his life as automata to be considered and ignored. It had, his manner of regarding them, in its way, deadened his sense of honour, respect, concerning women, while it had in no way encroached upon his respect for himself. The reason—Marcus was turned forty-one — he had asked Geraldine Condit to marry him was that the death of his mother had left a vacancy in the house that must be filled. He selected a woman to fill that vacancy as he engaged a chambermaid to make the beds.

And then he went to the theatre and saw Juanita.

For some reason, perhaps her own, he found it curiously difficult to meet her. . . . He was a whole month at the effort.

## CHAPTER III

When he did meet her a surprise awaited him. Juanita belonged, by inheritance, to a prominent if somewhat dingy New England family, and was clever and even brilliant to a degree. Her reason for being where he had found her embodied a philosophy of worldly wisdom that rather staggered him. Before leaving home, she told him, she had been surfeited by her observation of Massachusetts virtue at close range, and had come to the conclusion that it was a bore. She preferred, she said, danger to boredom.

By way of making herself entertaining she had then outlined to him the life that she might have lived at home, and contrasted it at length with her present life. One was perfectly safe and uneventful; the other was eventful and full of danger. Danger, Juanita said was—and Juanita laughed—exciting, if nothing more.

"Danger of what?" asked Marcus.

"Why," replied Juanita simply, "of men like you!"

"How would you like," Marcus had then asked, "to be my wife?"

"Not at all," was her reply, "it would put me out of the danger zone."

"Nevertheless," said Marcus, "you are going to be my wife."

"But *why?*" asked Juanita.

"Because I want you."

Three months later she accepted him.

"There's excitement," she told him, "in selling yourself, even to a husband."

For a short while she found excitement, the kind she sought, in the situation itself—herself as a gorgeous slave, the splendour of her environment, the opportunity to spend money, ride in her own car, clothe herself like a princess, be waited on by a French maid. She even found excitement in Marcus' passion for her, in charming and fascinating him, playing with a serious, deadly-in-earnest, cultured man of heavy emotions. She found excitement in her ability to look on at herself in the midst of all this.

And then one day it all palled on her and Juanita dreamed of a new excitement.

It planned itself, her new excitement, probably to a great extent unconsciously to Juanita, in the form of revenge. There had been moments when her delicate organization, mental and physical, had revolted against Marcus—when all that he had to offer in exchange for herself, suddenly, without her volition, became an insult to her, an insult to be avenged.

Juanita was tired, tired of his supremacy and power to command her, tired of her submerged personality. Instead of being a slave she suddenly dreamed of being the mistress of one. For the first time, perhaps, in her life, her eyes roamed mysteriously in crowded places, theatres, hotels, thoroughfares, at teas and receptions, among men. She thought a good deal and resentfully of all she was called upon to do to please Marcus, and then she began to dream of some one to please *her*.

She went, during this period, a good deal to the opera, falling into the music as into perfumed waves; she visited art galleries, standing enrapt before grotesquely posed humanity and ravishing landscapes. She drank when alone, after having arranged certain lights to please her fancy. Flowers occupied much of her attention. There was nothing unplanned or accidental in anything she did. She was entirely conscious of her efforts; she felt instinctively that they were tending to new sensations, a new excitement. She decided that the real excitements of life were born of intrigue, dissembling, planning. It occurred to her one day, occurred to her through the accumulation of slow intention, that the greatest excitement she could ever know would be to deceive Marcus

It must be said for Juanita that her mind acted charmingly at this time, that it flashed thoughts like a swiftly thrust sword in sunlight. Her existence, contemplating these new fields of endeavour, was, in spite of Marcus and a growing distaste for him, now that the novelty of her servility was over, an entrancing one. It was so entrancing that Juanita at times found herself in a panic fear of consequences.

## CHAPTER IV

It seemed to Marcus, as he sat pondering upon Juanita and the astounding situation in which he found himself, found himself through her, that a greater fool than himself had never existed on the earth before. Confronted by the results of his folly, it seemed to him that were he to burst into the harsh and thoroughly discordant laughter of an actor-manager it would be about the most appropriate thing to the occasion.

But Marcus was not a laughing man. He was a serious man, the man exactly, in fact, that Juanita considered him. Except for generations of clean linen he would have been in every sense a coarse man. That, however, it was impossible for him, at any rate in deportment, to be. Nevertheless, mentally he was coarse.

"What else," was his final rather platitudinous conclusion, "could I expect when I married an ordinary chorus-girl?"

But Marcus was checked here. Juanita was not an ordinary chorus girl. She was a girl every bit as well bred as himself. There seemed to Marcus for the moment very little to say about it. One thing was sure, that according to the correct woman he had thrown over for Juanita, and what certainly would have been the verdict, had she lived, of his mother, he had got his deserts. But since the deserts were still on his hands, considering all things, Juanita was not to be so easily dismissed.

What, in fact, was to be done with her? Punished, of course! But how? How was it possible to punish Juanita without, at the same time, punishing himself? Severely correct, insistent as to the proprieties of life, life's deportment, he saw himself through the very punishment he as yet so nebulously

planned to inflict upon Juanita, a mark for others to inflict punishment upon.

There were his mother's two unmarried sisters, prim and untouched by hair dyes; an uncle on his father's side, who boasted the most correct establishment in the seventies, an establishment from which Irish serving-women crept in and out surreptitiously through the basement door, while an English footman stood in the hall receiving sneering glances at intervals from the more active butler; there was, skipping over many more lesser lights, the woman he had abandoned for Juanita, and there was—Marcus rose to his feet at this point with a feeling that his hair was standing up—his club.

"If you put it over, old chap, it's all right." "Think you're wise, Marcus, eh!" "Dangerous experiment, old man." He remembered such phrases. His conclusion, with the vision before him of these confreres at the club, was that he was, certainly had been as far as Juanita was concerned, an ass. Having come to this conclusion, and having donned a bathrobe, he lighted another cigar and smoked it to the end.

By that time he had decided to leave home in the morning, and remain away for six weeks, thereby giving Juanita time to get on her feet to face him, and whatever disposition of her he decided to make. Just how to dispose of her and save himself was a problem that still remained unsolved. He had not yet arrived at considering her from the standpoint of herself. If Juanita had been, as she had frankly confessed, a purchased wife, she had served him well and without protest. She had even gone with him one Sunday morning to church. To the world she had enabled him to present a model wife. In secret she had enabled him to be himself.

Marcus was not a man given over to a valuation of human relations. A man was a man. That was his one and only clear idea of humanity. A man was a man. Those few words swept aside, as far as women were concerned, all things except outward deportment. For the first time, through Juanita, through the position in which she had put him, he saw woman as an entity to be considered. He saw them—it took effort, for Marcus' mind had only run glibly in certain grooves—the two of them, in their relative positions as man and wife. This surprising sight, this view, caused him for the first time in his life to experience contempt for himself. It was not contempt born of regret, but of humiliation. He had been outwitted and done, and such a thing had never before happened. Not only was he outwitted and done, but the one who had contrived this had him—no matter where he had her, where, as far as he was concerned, she had put herself—in a trap. To punish Juanita would make him a laughing stock:

Daylight found him still seated beside the table that contained the ashes of smoked cigars.

At seven o'clock he rang for his servant.

"Elkins," he said, "during the time that this house is a hospital I want to be out of it. Pack for a six weeks' trip."

At ten-thirty, without having bidden good-bye to his wife, he was on a train bound for the top of a high mountain that he knew. He nursed a glowering intention to kill everything on four legs or with wings that came his way. And he was bent upon melodramatic revenges, too, upon strange women.

To his surprise, Juanita had somehow robbed him of the power to carry out his second intention. Attractive women who passed him on the train, or, for that matter, out of it, only filled him with thoughts that burned in his brain uncomfortably.

## CHAPTER V

If Marcus was dumbfounded by the news of Juanita's returning health, the almost certainty of her living, what must this same news, that came so convincingly through her own feelings, have been to Juanita?

The full meaning of it, a revelation

And then one day it all palled on her and Juanita dreamed of a new excitement.

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What, in fact, was to be done with her? Punished, of course! But how? How was it possible to punish Juanita without, at the same time, punishing himself? Severely correct, insistent as to the proprieties of life, life's deportment, he saw himself through the very punishment he as yet so nebulously

planned to inflict upon Juanita, a mark for others to inflict punishment upon.

There were his mother's two unmarried sisters, prim and untouched by hair dyes; an uncle on his father's side, who boasted the most correct establishment in the seventies, an establishment from which Irish serving-women crept in and out surreptitiously through the basement door, while an English footman stood in the hall receiving sneering glances at intervals from the more active butler; there was, skipping over many more lesser lights, the woman he had abandoned for Juanita, and there was—Marcus rose to his feet at this point with a feeling that his hair was standing up—his club.

"If you put it over, old chap, it's all right." "Think you're wise, Marcus, eh!" "Dangerous experiment, old man." He remembered such phrases. His conclusion, with the vision before him of these confreres at the club, was that he was, certainly had been as far as Juanita was concerned, an ass. Having come to this conclusion, and having donned a bathrobe, he lighted another cigar and smoked it to the end.

By that time he had decided to leave home in the morning, and remain away for six weeks, thereby giving Juanita time to get on her feet to face him, and whatever disposition of her he decided to make. Just how to dispose of her and save himself was a problem that still remained unsolved. He had not yet arrived at considering her from the standpoint of herself. If Juanita had been, as she had frankly confessed, a purchased wife, she had served him well and without protest. She had even gone with him one Sunday morning to church. To the world she had enabled him to present a model wife. In secret she had enabled him to be himself.

Marcus was not a man given over to a valuation of human relations. A man was a man. That was his one and only clear idea of humanity. A man was a man. Those few words swept aside, as far as women were concerned, all things except outward deportment. For the first time, through Juanita, through the position in which she had put him, he saw woman as an entity to be considered. He saw them—it took effort, for Marcus' mind had only run glibly in certain grooves—the two of them, in their relative positions as man and wife. This surprising sight, this view, caused him for the first time in his life to experience contempt for himself. It was not contempt born of regret, but of humiliation. He had been outwitted and done, and such a thing had never before happened. Not only was he outwitted and done, but the one who had contrived this had him—no matter where he had her, where, as far as he was concerned, she had put herself—in a trap. To punish Juanita would make him a laughing stock.

Daylight found him still seated beside the table that contained the ashes of smoked cigars.

At seven o'clock he rang for his servant.

"Elkins," he said, "during the time that this house is a hospital I want to be out of it. Pack for a six weeks' trip."

At ten-thirty, without having bidden good-bye to his wife, he was on a train bound for the top of a high mountain that he knew. He nursed a glowering intention to kill everything on four legs or with wings that came his way. And he was bent upon melodramatic revenges, too, upon strange women.

To his surprise, Juanita had somehow robbed him of the power to carry out his second intention. Attractive women who passed him on the train, or, for that matter, out of it, only filled him with thoughts that burned in his brain uncomfortably.

## CHAPTER V

If Marcus was dumbfounded by the news of Juanita's returning health, the almost certainty of her living, what must this same news, that came so convincingly through her own feelings, have been to Juanita?

The full meaning of it, a revelation

of the entire situation, came to her on the first morning that she sat up in bed and enjoyed quite thoroughly, to the infinite delight of her nurse, her toast and tea.

Toast and tea had ever, and especially, as in this case, if a soft-boiled egg was added, been associated in Juanita's mind with a return to health. It was always on her return to health, an infrequent happening, for she was perfectly constructed physically, that she indulged in this simple diet. If she took an egg it must be *au beurre noir;* she invariably drank the strongest coffee that a percolator could percolate, and if she asked for toast at all it must be French toast, well buttered and richly fried. Nothing that was not highly coloured, or highly flavoured, appealed to Juanita, and it may have been this very thing, her side tracking the ordinary, that had brought her into a condition that the most hardened of life's voyagers could never once have failed to admit was highly coloured enough.

Juanita was not yet strong, not at all sufficiently strong to, as Marcus had done, grapple with the situation. So with a way she had of putting away from her things the future demanded her to face, to indulge the present, presenting no demands at all, she lay back in her pillows, stimulated into bodily comfort by her breakfast, and calmly took in the charm of her environment, now doubly agreeable through her return to the physically normal.

She had only to glance about her to see that a perfect day was in full evidence. The upholstering of the furniture of her room leaned exclusively to yellow, which colour responded charmingly to bright sunlight. Juanita ordered her yellow damask curtains parted, and her shades, yellow shades, raised. Forgetting, for a moment, Marcus and all that his presence in the world on this beautiful day meant to her, she found herself revelling in a gold-drenched atmosphere as radiant as a cloud-bereft sun could make it.

There was a moment—a good deal of her had disappeared—when Juanita felt herself very small, a little atom, was how she mentally expressed it. With her mind on the austere old frame house in which she was born, and lived before she came to New York, she wondered how she had managed to become the central figure of so much splendour. It encouraged her to fancy that having managed it she might almost dare to manage anything, even Marcus. There was one conclusion she came to: she was not going to surrender—and she waved one hand feebly—without putting up a brave fight.

She began, regarding him as an antagonist, to study him. He was a powerful man, but like all powerful men he had his weak spots. Just how far such a man, in spite of his weak spots, would go in his sudden indignation, sudden violent resentment, she—and Juanita closed her eyes with a slight shiver—could not quite make out.

So very uncertain was she as to how far he would go—she had seen him beat a dog unmercifully once, and he always rode with spurs—that for a while her mind became quite confused, so confused that it refused to act at all. It was, as it were, clouded over. Excitement, excitement born out of a situation from which she had found it necessary to extricate herself, had produced this mental chaos temporarily before, and so closely had Juanita analysed herself, her varying emotions under given conditions in the past, that it did not especially alarm her. It would pass. As a clear spring muddled by the turning of a stick in its bed cleared itself and bubbled on, so would her mind clear and bubble on.

She lay quite still a while, with her eyes closed, waiting for this to happen.

"I must not be afraid," she said finally, speaking her words aloud, slowly and deliberately. "I must not be afraid," she repeated, "either of the situation—never mind its being an extreme one—or of Marcus!"

She buoyed herself a while on her determination not to be afraid, knowing

perfectly all the time that she was very much afraid.

"But," she suddenly asked herself, "of what?"

The answer came. Of losing the comforts of a splendid environment—and her reputation. "Well," thought Juanita, "without a reputation, a splendid environment is not necessary. As a matter of fact, people who fling off a reputation feel pretty free and have a very good time!"

But what troubled Juanita, as she came to this conclusion, was that she knew she had by no means exhausted the present situation, which included not only her deference to an undamaged reputation, but also very comfortable and caressing wealth. And she looked about her, marking the value, after all, of being in just such a place as this, with a fine bed and very costly yellow furniture shining resplendently in an unusually brilliant sunlight.

The nurse entered with her medicine and pleasant things to say about the weather.

"If I can only see it," thought Juanita when she found herself alone again, "as a play with me in the leading rôle, a play that must turn out happily, why, I should think it might," and Juanita reverted to stage vernacular, "go over."

## CHAPTER VI

On the morning that ushered in the fourth week of Juanita's convalescence she was greatly disappointed to see that a heavy snowstorm was in the air.

It was a peculiar snowstorm, inasmuch as it was entirely in the air, the flakes refusing the offer of material substances, such as sidewalks, roofs and other things, by simply expiring when they touched them.

Juanita was, as a rule, delighted at the arrival of a snowstorm, but it happened that on this particular day she had decided to go out, be motored somewhere. She was as yet practically a prisoner, in the hands of nurses, and she feared there would be no end of discussion as to the advisability of the venture.

For a while, in a pale blue morning gown, she sat at her window watching the storm. The morning and afternoon passed, but not her intention to sally forth. At five o'clock, in spite of the fact that the clouds had become more serious, inasmuch as they were now showering down snowflakes of a more durable quality, she ordered her car, put on an ermine wrap with a turban to match, and had herself borne to a brownstone-front house in the fifties that had been converted into studio apartments.

Inside Juanita paused. The climb to the top, her destination, rather appalled her. She decided upon a slow, easy ascent with a pause on each landing.

There was nothing suggestive of the poverty of artists in this building. No poor artists, in fact, lived here. Instead there were men who had arrived financially as well as artistically, and rich poseurs who used art as an excuse for clipping the cords of conventions, rich frauds who paid obscure artists to do their work for them. These nameless dreamers mounted to their doom upon velvet-carpeted stairs, and saw their painted countenances, to be veiled inside the doors, reflected in handsome mirrors.

It was all familiar to Juanita. Her feet had trod the rich velvet of these carpeted stairs before, and she had seen her own matchless face in the mirrors that cast back their reflections, by day as well as by night, through the aid of electric lights shining through milky-blue globes.

As Juanita had sought the chorus life as an experience, she had upon one eventful day—it proved very eventful indeed—offered herself incognito, at first, for the sake of that excitement recognized by her as a necessity, a supreme one not to be denied—why should it be, Juanita demanded of herself?—as model to an artist well known to her by name.

As was usual with her, she had lived

out in her mind her career as an artist's model before she applied for the position, and she had concluded that if there was excitement in anything it would be in serving this remarkable man of brilliant mind and somewhat greenish reputation. Juanita, during her short life in the chorus, had heard of the revels in this studio.

She found the artist outwardly simple to a degree, as much of a surprise as she had been to Marcus. She was not long, however, in discovering that his simplicity was a perfected art, his naturalness merely cultivated artificially. He was poet as well as artist, a dreamer but a shrewd one. Pushed to the wall, he might have proved a bounder, but he was too clever to be pushed to the wall. He brushed aside combat as with a light feather. When indoors, he left his throat bare, and sometimes wore gold sandals.

His habitation, his studio, was charming in every way, possessed, in fact, all that such a mind as his might be expected to present as to environment. His colours blended like those of a rainbow and he managed lights as the heavens manage the sun, moon and stars through clouds. . . . His draperies were his clouds.

To Juanita he was the exact opposite of Marcus, a relief from Marcus, and as such was quickly recognized and appreciated.

When he learned who she was, he accepted her as both model and friend. He arranged all things to please her. To-day he greeted her eagerly.

"Juanita!" he exclaimed, "you!"

One of the conditions of their acquaintance was that if she suddenly disappeared he was to make no inquiries, molest her in no way, and as he was as intellectually beyond emotional abandonment as Juanita herself, he had found it simple enough to obey. Juanita had been and gone! He accepted it. Here, at the end of six months, she suddenly returned. He accepted that.

"You are pale," he said, leading her forward.

"Yes," her lids fluttered, "the steps!" She controlled her fluttering lids and smiled. "I'm something of an invalid."

"Sit down, Juanita!" He peered at her solicitously as he seated her in a thickly upholstered armchair.

She was glad to close her eyes and rest her head against the back of the chair.

He moved off and returned with a glass of sherry.

"Have you been so ill?"

"I've performed a wonderful feat," she said, after swallowing the wine quickly. "I've brought a human being into the world!"

"Ah!" He drew a chair up with the charmingly eager manner familiar to her and seated himself directly in front of her.

"That *is* a wonderful feat!" he exclaimed.

"And yet," said Juanita, "one so very casually accepted!"

"Juanita accepts nothing casually. Therein lies her charm. Do you know, dear girl, I've actually missed you!"

It was characteristic of him to dismiss serious considerations in just this manner, and Juanita had not contemplated his taking her news any differently. She had gone to him with no idea whatever of shouldering upon him any responsibility.

"I doubt it," she said.

"Why?"

"Both you and I are too self-absorbed for that."

"Then you have not missed me?"

"I live in the moment, Paul! An experience with me is an experience while it lasts. I lived for several months in the excitement of life on the stage. From the day I left I rarely thought of it. It was the same with you!"

"And do you accept motherhood, Juanita, with the same indifference?"

"It was too short-lived an experience for me to say."

"Short-lived?" His eyes started slightly.

"When you have heard what I have to tell you you will understand that it was a great relief to me. I now regard

it all as a wonder, a mysterious achievement which hardly concerned me. Really," she added with an airy lifting of her hand, "nothing should be taken too seriously except—"

"Except what, Juanita?"

"The loss of one's comfort—a position once attained."

"I quite agree with you!"

"I am in danger of just that very thing."

"What?"

"Losing my comforts and the position I have got through my marriage."

"How is that?"

Juanita was becoming enigmatical and he again noted her extreme pallor.

"Wait a moment!" he exclaimed.

There are beings who cannot be said to walk; they move or leap about. He was one of these. She knew why he had left her. He would return bearing his bronze tray with glasses on it.

"Conversation without drinks," he had once said to her, "is like love without kisses."

Wine, incense, pale colourings, the skylight through which they saw the stars and clouds, or shut out the heavens with those intense blue shades—Juanita thought him remarkable beneath his blue dome. And his pictures, all those pale, poetic pictures, inoffensive impressions that stirred strangely, one scarcely knew why, except that in nearly all his own rather wondrous face, himself, stood boldly or vaguely outlined!

There was no escaping him in his own domain. He was a dancer; he looked at you from the depths of a forest; he plied the oars of a boat; he made love to an elfish maiden; he kneeled at the feet of an old woman. . . . He was everywhere, in every pose.

While he was absent Juanita lay back in the low chair with her eyes for the better part upon the skylight where the snow lay thick. Occasionally she shifted an oblique glance to a nearby window, where the snowflakes, lazy and soft, like an army of slaughtered moths, tumbled earthward. It was beautiful, the snowy doom, the snowflakes falling and the violent tints of the studio fading into grey. When he reappeared he paused to touch into flame a violet bulb. The white doom responded and there was light enough.

"How calm and beautiful it all is here!" she said after a silence, as he filled her glass. "And this wine sparkling in this glass! What a joy," she exclaimed, "to know how to live!"

"And to know how to love!" he whispered.

She thought a moment.

"People who love do not live well," she answered quietly. "They grow stupid. It is those like you and me, who understand self-exploitation without love, the value of accessories, of a colour, a flavour, a kiss withheld, who know life. But I must not fall into a dream with you, Paul! Through dreaming with you," and she half laughed, "disaster has befallen me!"

"Disaster?"

"There is a great possibility of its becoming one."

"Tell me, Juanita!"

"I fear I became, through weakness, of course, insane for a moment. That is, I was a victim of conscience." She broke off. "You will hear a very interesting story, Paul!"

"Stories of conscience are not interesting, Juanita!"

"As a rule, no."

For a while they sat in silence, with the purple light in the distance shining like a star.

"What is the interesting story of conscience?" he smiled at her finally.

"I made—don't be too amazed!—a deathbed confession to Marcus! I told him that the baby was not his!"

She prevented his speaking. "That is my present position there in the house. He is away. When he returns I am to be disposed of, I suppose, as he sees fit!"

"Juanita!"

She lifted a jewelled hand. "That is, in spite of its foundation on conscience, an interesting story, isn't it?"

"But, dear girl, what will you do?"

She took an upright position, and he thought how beautiful she was in her nest of pure ermine, quite luminously so, in fact.

"I shall fight," she said, "with myself as my weapon! Some day I may *want* to leave. The fever—the thing that brought me to the stage and brought me to you—may overtake me, prove too strong. I don't know about that; I am uncertain; worthless perhaps, except as an *edition de luxe* of humanity. As that, for the present, I want to pose and, of course, this *edition de luxe* must be properly housed, placed. I'm going to fight to overcome an impossible situation that in a moment of weakness I blundered into."

"You're a brave girl, Juanita!" And he lightly clapped his hands.

"What I came to tell you is that—for I can't, of course, be *sure* of victory—no matter what you hear, you must have no fear about yourself. In this case I believe the woman should be the protector of the man. It was I who intruded upon you. The whole situation, Paul, as far as you are concerned, is a dead incident."

"You are a sweet child!" he exclaimed, and she knew that he felt no responsibility, could feel none. She smiled upon him as one smiles upon a vanishing day.

"I am very far from being a sweet child," she said. "I take what I want out of life, fully conscious that the price may be lurking somewhere. I have the courage for that! That is about all!"

"You are a strange being, Juanita."

"I am the result of generations of decaying culture and disdainful deportment. I am a perfectly natural product, indifferent, irresponsible, and I accept myself understandingly."

"You are like my work, Juanita, all technique, all colour, no soul."

"Or like you!" She stood up. "I am on the eve of a great battle, Paul, a battle to take place in a drawing-room. I mean to fight to win! If I lose, I will see what lies in being an outcast!"

She turned, gathered the ermine wrap about her and left.

He could think of her, crowned in her turban only as a snow image that had melted from his presence. He listened keenly for the faint sound of the closing of the outside door. When, after what seemed to him a long while, he heard it, he experienced a sense of relief. He knew that Juanita had gone out of his life and the full meaning of himself as a dead incident rather wearied him. He marvelled that he could be that, and at her indifference, her courage, her detachment—marvelled more at his memories of her that her intrusion had disturbed, but that were now, on the instant, back in his mind like old, faded prints in a deserted house.

There was intense loneliness in his memories, with a kind of sad yearning. He recalled that on several occasions, auspicious occasions, he had read to her Browning's "The Faultless Painter." But his reading had failed of purpose. Her mission was not a soul mission. What then? She had used the word spiritual. Was it that? He hardly knew. She was intangible.

And yet how wonderful, he thought, as he emptied the remaining contents of the bottle into his glass and lifted it as to her, how ruthless, detached, living upon fine emotions as an orchid upon air! He was pleased as he thought thus. Juanita was a human orchid, delicate, exquisite, fine, almost too ethereal to be human, as the orchid was too ethereal to be a flower. She was beyond those emotions that made any call upon her. She had never suggested that he had awakened love in her; she told him, in fact, quite plainly that she scorned an idea whose devotees became slaves, victims of themselves and others. Motherhood had been greeted by her simply as a mysterious accomplishment of nature through her, and she had not by any insinuation suggested that he was at all associated in her mind with the event.

He seated himself, placed the emptied glass on the floor beside his chair, and

feeling a bit strange, a bit drowsy, fixed his eyes on the window through which Juanita had watched the leisurely descending snowflakes. It was now only a black square. It fascinated him to observe the change in the window, that all its magic effects had been swallowed up in the night.

With Juanita's departure forever out of his life—and he felt it was that—he likened himself to that window with all his magic effects swallowed up in a kind of soul darkness. If Juanita had loved him! He smiled. Juanita could not love him. From the beginning to the end he had served her spiritually, as Marcus, the big husband had served her materially.

## CHAPTER VII

Marcus was a precise man. At the end of six weeks he returned.

On entering the drawing-room he discovered Juanita lying on a blue velvet couch in a yellow kimono embroidered in flowers.

The sight of her thus lounging in the drawing-room in a negligée, looking like a geisha, gave him a sense of the house disorganized. He seemed on his very arrival to breathe deterioration. A sensuous decay had dared penetrate the portals of a home that had hitherto existed correctly, healthily, a veritable shrine of virtue.

She was pale, this exotic he had introduced here, pale and delicate-looking, but it was plain to see she was practically recovered.

She was reading a novel bound in yellow, and appeared to him, in the circumstances, extremely luxurious and insolent. The sight of her thus, the sight of her daring to appear natural, her own indifferent self, infuriated him.

Before her eyes could meet his he turned sharply, as sharply as Marcus ever turned, and went down the hall, a hall furnished and decorated with all the splendour of an ancient palace, to the library. Here he stood inside the door with a slightly alarmed manner, making discreet observation, as though even in the precincts of the one place he claimed exclusively flippancy may have intruded. Nothing was changed, however. Everything seemed simply to have fallen asleep.

It was a handsome room—as were all the rooms of this correct home—a bit solemn, certainly massive, as befit the habits of a somewhat solid, and certainly massive, man. It seemed to Marcus that the room awoke, that everything in it awoke, cautiously, and stared condescendingly at him, the wronged husband. He had a feeling that inanimate objects, so long given over to deferential service to his exclusive comfort, might suddenly laugh in his face. This was an extraordinary mental flight born of unnatural tension, for Marcus was not an imaginative man.

He walked over defiantly and raised a shade, admitting a flood of sunlight. As he turned to seat himself he faced Juanita on the inside of the open door.

Having forced a momentary gaze into his eyes, she closed the door and came forward.

He took his seat at his desk, a broad, tablelike affair of heavily carved mahogany, and Juanita took a step that placed her directly opposite him. . . . They faced each other across the table.

Since Marcus last saw her in her present position, discussing with him her preference for a red car over the prescribed grey of his choice, she was changed. She had always been beautiful, but for the first time she was lovely. Motherhood had, in spite of her defilement of its sacredness, stamped her thus. Except for the over-full bosom, sharply noted by him, she looked girlishly pathetic. There was, now that she no longer flaunted the yellow-back novel—Marcus saw it as flaunted—a certain weariness, languor, as though her strength was being taxed, as though it cost her strength to sustain herself. She had, in fact, the helpless look of all young mothers, was acutely feminine through it, easily an object of appeal. Marcus caught sight of this look and was for the moment baffled by it. But this passed and he saw Juanita the vic-

tim of herself, caught in a trap. Just as he had felt that the furniture wanted to laugh in his face, he now wanted to laugh in hers. Denied this relief, an inward rage began to burn him. If motherhood had made of her in appearance an appeal, her lack of chastity had made her an affront. She was standing there, consciously or unconsciously, a self-erected target to be shot at. At any rate, he so regarded her. In his sight Juanita had committed a crime that not only stirred him to revolt, but that quivered the ashes of his ancestors.

Suddenly his lips curled. Her frailty was purely physical. Her sin had not even humbled her. Her manner was unruffled. She looked boldly at him; she wore a gay costume.

He fixed upon her a penetrating glance that she accepted, a bit charmed by the dramatic situation, a bit charmed by Marcus himself, so big, so lustily masculine, this being who in a moment of weakness she had undone, as, in all probability, she had undone herself. His eyes were, or so it seemed to her, those usually calm brown eyes so steadily fixed upon her, luminously evil. He was much paler than she had ever seen him, and this emphasized the bluish tint the lower part of his face took on after shaving. It was thought of the coarse beard, never completely effaced, that had, after a day's growth, caused her pain through one of Marcus' uncouth —to her certainly rude—kisses, that gave her, as the thought of pain will, courage to speak.

"I've come," she said, "to know what you intend to do with me!"

He detected a sneer in her voice, a sneer out of bitter recollections, and his staring eyes marvelled. They questioned her.

"You were bold enough to select me," she took up against the silence, "in the face of your own judgment and that of others. Are you going to be bold enough to abide by your own choice?"

"I am not."

"You are sure of that?"

"Yes."

"In coming to that decision aren't you losing sight too much of the individual?"

"The individual?" asked Marcus blankly.

"Yes, of me; my value to you; what you married me for?"

She was standing her ground with soldier-like calm. Juanita, however, was not calm. The game was in his hands, the decision as to what her future was to be. Her attitude was what she had decided upon. She was going to play herself as her trump card. She was not exactly at home in her rôle. She was used to command through more subtle means. She had won Marcus by very subtle means. There was no time now for subtle means. She had to fight openly, in her own opinion, vulgarly. There came over her for the moment a certain sense of revolt, disgust, a desire to give up, surrender, walk out of the room, and out of the house. . . . She even wondered what she would do first.

A vision of Paul came up and of his studio, of other men, and other studios, of the passions and fatigues of men, of change, adventure, struggle, of gradually going down—of a garret, maybe—the end.

As opposed to this she saw the man seated in front of her, the man who kept her standing in his presence, the man who was holding her not through himself, but through what he stood for, and had. She saw distinctly two paths for her to tread. In either path she chose she would be a chattel, a conquered thing. A chill passed over her, followed by a glimpse, so indistinct she could not define it, of something different. She felt a momentary acute longing for this something, something that was like Paul's environment, his habitation, himself, but was not there. As she looked at Marcus seated like an evil statue, she wished that he could supply it. What? She did not know, and felt the inclination of hysterical laughter at the idea. All that Marcus had to give was what she had sold herself to him for, the chance to be wealthy, to live in luxury and pose as respectable.

She stood respectfully before this, stood quite a while looking at Marcus, who represented these things, these things with herself as the price of them. He was like a graven image seated there so arrogantly, calm and unmoved, seated there with the power to pronounce judgment on her, become the judge to pronounce sentence upon her — state what her future was to be. She recalled him when he was not this graven image, not this haughty judge about to pronounce a sentence, but a man given over to himself at her expense.

It encouraged her to go on with the battle with herself as a weapon. His position was strong. Was he capable of being as strong as his position?

"Marcus," she suddenly asked, "what's the meaning of for better or for worse?"

"The words have no meaning."

"They were merely, then, put in to decorate the marriage service?"

"They probably were put in by an enthusiast. No man takes a woman as his wife for better or for worse."

"No?"

"He believes in his power to make the better prevail."

"Isn't that something of a gamble?"

"You have proven to me that it is."

"Is it," and she glanced at a chair on the other side of the table, "permissible for me to take a seat at this court of justice?"

She walked over and took the seat.

There was a slight pause until she rather exclaimed, bending forward slightly: "Do you know that what I am is the result of you?"

"No."

"That I was a good girl when you married me?"

"I don't even know that."

"Do you doubt it?"

"I do."

The blood mounted, and she sat quite a while, feeling that a flame was being fanned to her face.

Finally she said, for the first time nervously, "You must let me talk, explain the situation as it appears to you!"

"The situation as it is," corrected Marcus.

"Yes, as it is. I married you, allowed you to purchase me—"

"You would oblige me by cutting short any discussion of that. It may interest you, but it doesn't interest me in the least."

"I will," she flashed. "I will speak of *you!* When I met you I had not the faintest idea of what selling myself to you as a wife would mean. I faced the situation in my imagination, not once as it actually turned out to be! I've suffered horribly by your insults."

Marcus stood up. "Insults?" he inquired icily.

"Yes, the insults of your very nature!"

She was on her feet, facing him, but suddenly dropped back to her seat. He, also, took his seat, looking away from her. For some reason his size began to affect him. He felt grotesquely large. He was afraid to look at her, she seemed at the moment — the moment that was the outcome of her words — grotesquely small. This quickly passed and he was quite natural again, natural, stoical and vindictive. He was waiting to dispose of Juanita! That he allowed her to talk was due to politeness, a habit of deportment too fixed to be overthrown, a habit he could not escape.

"You wore on me terribly," he heard her saying, "I sought relief through my imagination, in imaginary situations. It was almost like provoking hallucinations. For days at a time I would live in the belief that I was a slave. I went back to ancient days—to the block, went through it all, myself as the slave, and you as the highest bidder. I've actually felt the chains on my wrist. Often when you came to me, in my mind, I stood before you thus. It aided me. I was not really I. You were not really you! Once I fancied that you were Nero and that some torture awaited me as soon as you should leave me, my death perhaps at your command. Once I fancied myself an octoroon with you as master with a whip in your hand, and

the right to command me. And during all these months of mental and physical torture you never once noted these things. You saw only yourself."

He made no reply to this and she burst forth:

"Disgusted with both you and myself, can't you understand that I sought relief from us both? I was tired of amusing you, being ignored by you, and yet at your beck and call! In my own eyes you had made a worthless thing of me, a being with no self-respect. It is as that, a being without self-respect, I am offering myself to-day. You didn't marry me for any especial wifely virtues I might have to offer you. An incident occurred that, after all, you are responsible for. Why can't you forget it? Let us go on living on the low basis you established for us! I am willing to go on taking you for what you are. Why can't you take me for what I am? I don't respect you, so why should you respect me?"

"You are actually demanding," asked Marcus, "to live under my roof as my wife without my respect?"

She stood up, her breast heaving slightly. "I've never had it!" she exclaimed.

To be fair to Marcus, he was rather taken off his feet by this. It was certainly news to him!

Juanita saw his surprise, that she had, for the moment, met him, and before he could recover himself she deliberately flashed into his eyes that well-remembered searchlight glance that penetrated to his centres.

It angered Marcus, angered and dismayed him. With a movement to escape her, escape contact perhaps of the gay kimono, he swept by her and out of the room.

For a moment a feeling of loneliness went through Juanita, the loneliness of an antagonist robbed of his opponent. She looked about her bewildered. Marcus had shown strength. She laughed, wanted to applaud him, applaud him that he was at last assuming a rôle that made him interesting.

She felt excited. . . . Tears sprang to her eyes. She passed her hand across her cheek where his beard had so often torn at the delicate skin, and across her lips where his kisses had caused pain. A rather wicked gleam shot into her eyes. She had decided to wage a new battle, if, for nothing else, the battle itself. She was, since the contest was undecided—the effect of her glance told her that—going to fight Marcus in a way that made her feel wicked and rather ashamed.

## CHAPTER VIII

In the evening she dressed herself resplendently for dinner.

The costume of her selection was one that on former occasions had invited ardent glances from Marcus.

It was of diaphanous shining silver, and with it she always wore a scarlet rose over her left ear. . . . She had not forgotten the rose this evening.

Seated alone at the large dining table —for Marcus did not arrive for dinner —Juanita could see herself very plainly in the mirror opposite her, a very broad mirror that rested on a marble shelf and reached well up to the ceiling.

Juanita had often seen Marcus' back reflected in this mirror. It seemed to her as she sat there with her elbows on the table peering at herself, that she represented a small image of evil. Her mind swept back to the large, still, tree-covered yard of her childhood and she wondered at her development into this little image of evil. It rather fascinated her, though, what she had done with her life, for herself. It was really, after all, in spite of Marcus, Marcus who had proven the means to an end, quite wonderful. She had only to hold on, that was all, hold on by forcing Marcus to let go—let go of certain ideas that stood in her way.

It seemed impossible to Juanita that she could, by a word from him, be swept out of it all, this very room, in fact, with its silver and cut-glass and highly decorated china, shining and exciting her. She wanted to laugh at the

very idea, but was suddenly alarmed by the other side of the picture—that Marcus *would* sweep her out, and with the dinner only half served she rushed out of the room, hurried up the stairs to her own.

This room represented *her*. She could think better here, recover from her disappointment at not being able to open fire on Marcus at dinner.

It was quite two hours later that she, as if in obedience to a sudden thought, rang for her maid and changed the shining silver costume for a velvet kimono. The red rose remained in her hair, and Juanita felt in this costume even better equipped for her battle, that eternal battle of the sexes, that she was a part of, but had no broad conception of.

Her room was not only furnished in yellow, but all the lights were reflected through amber-coloured globes. In the golden reflection, costumed as she was with her hair down and the red rose gleaming, she was what she felt herself —sufficiently enticing to have hopes of the evening as hers. She knew that she was radiantly beautiful, knew the value of radiant beauty, and that Marcus was only acting the part of strength. She fully believed her antagonist assailable and was playing herself, as she had decided she would, as her trump card.

For a while she moved about restlessly, tossing sofa pillows to make them breathe forth their perfumes, and bringing to their aid the spray of dainty atomizers. Once she laughed; once the tears sprang to her eyes. Juanita in her rôle of the little warrior was strangely excited, eager. . . . Marcus would sit in his chair and she would spring like a kitten to his lap.

Juanita had many thoughts, many little plans that kept her mind busy, very busy indeed.

She grew tired at last, or seemed to. The rose fell to the floor and she seated herself in a big armchair, drew her feet up under her, placed her elbow on the arm and with her face in her hand peered intently at the open doorway.

It was twelve o'clock when she heard Marcus enter, and like a dog who hears his master's step, her eyes flashed and she listened.

To reach his own room he must pass her open door. Juanita's heart was beating somewhat wildly, but her position was unchanged.

Marcus, attracted by the open door, saw her thus forcing upon him her personality, a personality that had from the beginning stamped her as his, and that was now being emphasized through the sensuous glow of an atmosphere drugged in mingled perfumes. . . . This room and these perfumes were well known to Marcus.

He paused, ran his fingers through his hair, and walked more rapidly than usual to his room.

Juanita started and then felt faint. She was not strong and had been toying rather violently with her emotions.

She leaped to her feet, stood breathless a moment, felt herself being swept out of it all, strangely out of the life of Marcus, and burst into tears.

## CHAPTER IX

When Marcus reached his room a vision of Juanita remained in his mind; the perfume she had, and he knew this, forced upon him, lingered in his nostrils. He was unable to think clearly, felt himself losing ground.

He tried to picture himself housed with Juanita on the lines she had outlined, tried to lower himself, as one is temporarily lowered through pronounced inclination, to that level. It revolted him, for to be fair to Marcus, he had never dreamed of holding himself otherwise than a wholly correct, self-respecting, irreproachable individual, and this brought him, with a swing, face to face with himself in a divorce court. That, himself offering opportunities for sensational—the Schuyler name alone would do that—headlines in the newspapers, in addition to facing judges and curious persons as a wronged husband—it gripped Marcus every time he saw himself as a wronged husband—proved even more than trying. It proved so trying, in fact, that

Marcus, who was Marcus without being Aurelius, suddenly felt himself consumed by a violent and for that matter, too, unexpected rage. And what was stranger still—strange things were happening in rapid succession, in itself a novel experience, to Marcus—this sudden and unexpected rage ended in a fierce desire to hold Juanita in his arms.

He started, as he had so often done before, to seek her, a figure of fire enveloped in the golden glow of her boudoir, when equally as suddenly the thought of her repelled him. He took a rather soldier-like position in the centre of his spacious, high-ceilinged room and remained there, struggling for precise reasoning, in vain, perhaps, until interrupted by his servant, who appeared with pyjamas, bathrobe and other things such as slippers, for Marcus' comfort for the night.

Being trained to obey the silent command of servants, Marcus went to bed.

In the morning, as was quite natural, he decided upon exactly the same plan his grandfather, great-grandfather, for that matter, might, most surely would, have adopted.

Just as he had left home to get possession of himself through slaughtering things that walked on four legs, or flew by the aid of wings, he sent for the minister.

In considering this step Marcus sincerely regretted the death of a former minister, old Mr. Winthrop, who had preached in the same pulpit sixty years, and died finally of extreme old age. Had this minister, old Mr. Winthrop, been alive, Marcus felt sure he would have been tremendously aided in putting the thumb-screws on Juanita—even the burning, red-hot irons might have been, although, of course, not seriously considered, referred to. A woman like Juanita old Mr. Winthrop would no doubt have said, although it might not be feasible, should be burned—Mr. Winthrop might have added with a pious gesture—at the stake.

Marcus would have known just how to meet Mr. Winthrop, just how to look, act—Marcus paid high for church privileges—conduct himself even to the tone of his voice. . . . Marcus rehearsed just how he would have waved Mr. Winthrop to his seat.

In doing this he was really giving himself time to decide, come to some kind of conclusion, as to how to meet the new pastor, Mr. Wingfield Montague.

This Mr. Montague, as different from old Mr. Winthrop as an ocean in storm is different from a sandy beach, had rather, on first sight, terrified Marcus. It seemed to him as he slipped into the chancel on the eventful day of his appearing in Mr. Winthrop's place, that he might, instead of expounding the sacred gospel, blow a bugle that would in some miraculous manner cause the roof of the church to fall in on the members. It seemed that with one sweeping glance Mr. Montague had cursed his parishioners rather than blessed them. Marcus had for some reason felt an especial curse directed at himself, and remembered perfectly that he had wondered whether Mr. Montague had been informed as to his having married a girl out of the chorus.

This thought so absorbed Marcus that he had missed the Collect and found himself all on a sudden wondering if it had been omitted. This Mr. Montague, this six-foot-two giant, who had the temerity to carry his gold curls and blue eyes through life with him, certainly as far as he had gone, which was somewhere in the thirties, seemed a man capable of anything different, extraneous, Marcus almost thought outrageous, since he rode, dressed like a society man, horseback every morning in the park, and had even been seen doing the same thing on one or two occasions Sunday afternoon. Marcus had seen him himself in the mornings when he, also, often rode his own horse Blanco, and had heard the other discussed at the club. . . . There could be no doubt about it.

Still, having been brought on from Idaho, where he was making some kind of an oratorical stir that had reached as far as New York, to fill Mr. Win-

throp's place—Marcus often noticed that strange things happened in this life—he was the minister in charge, and as such he, Marcus, being in need of a minister, was the one to be called in.

"A doctor for your body," Marcus' father was wont to say, "a minister for your soul, and leave the rest to God."

It had always seemed to Marcus that these words contained the whole wisdom of life. You put things on the doctor, minister, and God, thereby relieving yourself of all responsibility. In Marcus' eye the doctor, minister and God formed a strong trio.

Juanita, already agitated over the consideration of the day before, which had left her if not stranded, suspended, was standing at the window when Mr. Montague's car drove up.

This gentleman was, of course, since Juanita had been to the church, known to her by sight, had been frequently spoken of in the home on account of Marcus having said very often, over and over, in fact, that some time they must invite Mr. Montague to dinner.

At the sight of this gentleman, an even larger man than Marcus, Juanita felt a slight tremor pass over her. These two large men were no doubt on the eve of a discussion about her, a discussion as to her fate.

She turned from the window and rather blankly faced the room. She liked Mr. Montague. On one occasion, while he was speaking, he had lifted her from her seat to her feet and held her there breathless. It caused her—for Juanita had her own innate delicacy as to her private affairs, as well as Marcus'—a twinge that she was to be, her character, held up for inspection, that she was to be discussed with Mr. Montague. She was, however, not especially overcome by this, any dramatic situation outweighing in Juanita's opinion almost any other consideration, and fell to wondering whether Mr. Montague would turn the tide for or against her. She rather felt that he might prove himself, from certain things she had heard him say, an ally, and would have liked very much before he reached Marcus to have given him a glimpse of herself in the very lovely costume she was wearing. . . . It was quite a part of Juanita to revert to herself as a trump card worth playing.

In the meantime, while Juanita was thus holding converse with herself, Marcus was greeting the minister in the drawing-room.

The greeting over, one savouring of a death in the house, Marcus asked his guest if he would mind following him to the library.

Mr. Montague did not in the least mind the library—in fact, he answered with a manner indicating "or the roof" if Marcus felt inclined for that place. Mr. Montague plainly seemed to say that place mattered to him not at all, but that he was almost eagerly interested in what he had been called in to hear—be a part of.

Inside the library Marcus—after all, Mr. Montague, in spite of an, and especially at this moment, appearance wholly to the contrary, was the minister—waved Mr. Montague to a seat, a large maroon leather armchair, with pretty much the same manner, same deference, he would have observed had Mr. Montague really been Mr. Winthrop.

"I suppose," said Marcus after a brief pause, after getting up to close the door that Mr. Montague had left open when following him in, "you may have heard, Mr. Montague, that my wife was a former chorus girl."

"No," said Mr. Montague, "I have never heard that. How is Mrs. Schuyler?"

Marcus ignored the inquiry.

"Naturally," he went on, "both the members of my family, and my friends at large—my intimate friends, of course—warned me against such a marriage."

"There is a prejudice, I believe," answered Mr. Montague as he eyed Marcus rather closely.

He was a strikingly handsome man, this Mr. Montague, the kind of type made famous by the great depictor of charming men, poor Ouida. It was his peculiar blond handsomeness, and his

wholly unclerical manner of carrying it off, that Marcus had from the very beginning resented as not befitting a clergyman—all clergymen should closely resemble old Mr. Winthrop—and resented in the present moment even more strenuously. Marcus would have preferred that Mr. Montague be much plainer, more politely distant, far less eagerly interested. He was more used to that kind of men. How much easier it would have been for Marcus if old Mr. Winthrop were seated in the chair now occupied by the virile, rather glorious-looking Mr. Montague.

"I have a very remarkable story to tell you, Mr. Montague," he burst forth finally, "an embarassing story, too."

"I am used to remarkable and embarrassing stories, Mr. Schuyler. Any man who lives in close touch with humanity invariably hears them. Life itself is remarkable and often embarrassing. Haven't you found it so?"

"I can't say that I have," answered Marcus. "We have lived in this house, my family has, over a hundred years, and the life in it has never appeared remarkable or embarrassing until—"

"You introduced into it," laughed Mr. Montague, "the little chorus girl!"

"The situation is a serious one, Mr. Montague."

"I don't doubt it!"

"An impossible one!"

"That I do doubt. I have found very few impossible situations that could not be straightened out into very possible ones—that is if one wants to! What's the impossible situation, Mr. Schuyler?"

Mr. Montague was looking Marcus straight in the eye.

"A little less than two months ago my wife gave birth to a child."

"Yes."

"She was very ill."

"Yes."

"In fact, for a short period her life was despaired of."

"Yes."

"She herself was convinced that she was dying—that she was on her death bed."

"Yes?"

"She made, what she supposed to be, a death-bed confession."

"To the effect?"

Marcus could not have had a more ardent listener than Mr. Montague. His expression was alert, his eyes beautifully bright. Nevertheless, the interest, the ardent attention of his listener, did not aid Marcus. He was embarrassed by it. It made his task difficult. But Marcus at heart was not a coward, only a man crippled by conventions, so he came out with it bravely, bravely for him indeed.

"She confessed to me that I was not the father of her child!"

In spite of himself Mr. Montague's eyes betrayed his surprise.

"And then recovered?" he asked quickly.

"Yes, she is to-day practically well."

For the first time Mr. Montague saw a betraying flash in Marcus' eye.

"I must say," said Mr. Montague, "that it is a remarkable story, a remarkable situation. May I smoke?"

Marcus waved a polite answer.

When Mr. Montague had lighted his cigar to his satisfaction he said: "And you have sent for me, I take it, to ask my advice?"

"I have!"

Mr. Montague puffed away a moment at his cigar and then fixed his eyes outside the window as if in deep thought.

"It's a curious thing," he said to Marcus a moment later, "how quickly the mind acts."

Marcus, with that habit of his of being unsympathetic, did not reply to this.

Mr. Montague, used to just such men as Marcus among his congregation, was in no way affected by it. He was quite used to this, as well as other, practical tricks of such men, to hold their own and maintain a profound dignity.

So he answered: "In the short time that I had my eye on that window, Mr. Schuyler, I went over your entire situation, went back, too, from the present moment to the hundred years that your family has occupied this—I won't say house—mansion. It is that!"

Marcus was still silent. In the business world these silences of his forced people to the point.

"I am ready," and Mr. Montague smiled, "with my advice, which is— By the way! What about Mrs. Schuyler since her recovery—how have things been between you?"

"When the doctor told me she would get well, I went away and only returned yesterday."

"Have you talked with her?"

"I have."

"To any purpose?"

"No."

"What is her attitude?"

"I should say," said Marcus, "more remarkable even than her confession. I would call her defiant."

"There must be," said Mr. Montague thoughtfully, "a reason or she couldn't be."

Marcus was again silent.

"I've heard some remarkable stories in my time out West around the mining camps and the like, Mr. Schuyler," Mr. Montague took up after a silence of his own, "but it does seem to me that this will go down in my mental notebook as one of the most remarkable of my life. My advice, though, is—"

He paused, looking with that way of his hard at Marcus.

"What?" inquired Marcus.

"Shoulder the situation! Be a man and bear the consequences of your own act!"

"My own act?"

"Your marriage to a chorus girl."

"That is quite impossible!" said Marcus, rising, and reseating himself.

"There are two things that, if properly considered, will make it possible. Self-effacement and duty to the woman you purchased illicitly!"

"Illicitly!" inquired Marcus. "What do you mean by that?"

"The fact that your wife has dared assume a defiant attitude towards you, when her position is so purely a defenceless one, proves to me that there was nothing sacred about your marriage, that she has grounds for resentment. I believe she has. You no doubt used the church to sanction your dalliance with this young woman, and you shouldn't insult the church that gave you the chance by—I may speak plainly, Mr. Schuyler?—airing your dirty linen! You married her, now keep her! I know a man out in Idaho, a far stronger and better man—for his character has been tested—than you, who has forgiven his wife five separate infidelities."

"I wouldn't call such a being a man," said Marcus coldly.

"No," answered Mr. Montague fervently, "he isn't—he's a god! There are some beings on this earth who get beyond being men! Shall I tell you what my opinion of the ordinary man is, Mr. Schuyler? They aren't fit to kiss the feet of the worst woman that hangs around a mining camp. I've looked on at the life of both! I'll warrant that your wife, in spite of her misstep, is a ten times better woman than you are a man—that she's just as worthy of being your wife as you are of being her husband!"

"What do you know about me, Mr. Montague?" Marcus' anger had risen.

"I know you picked a mistress out of a chorus."

"I made her my wife!"

"That's just what I'm complaining of! You got the church of Christ to stand by you, see you through! In my opinion you got your deserts!"

"If you were not a minister, Mr. Montague, I would say you were most insulting!"

"I'm not speaking to you as a minister! I'm speaking to you as a man, as man to man, and you've got a perfect right to resent anything I say on those terms. You sent for me for advice. I'm going to give it my own way, you can rest assured of that! And I can help you. But the only way I can help you is to show you yourself. For instance: Every thought you ever had concerning your wife from the first time your eyes fell on her in the chorus line was a discreditable one! Name of God, man, why can't you go on? Why renege? Why fly the track? Let me tell you, indiscretion or not, she's plenty

good for you! That isn't the thing, though, to argue with you! Your inheritance has made it difficult for you to see things in that light. I'll put it this way: She fooled you in secret; don't let her make a fool of you in public."

"What do you mean?" asked Marcus with a scowl, for Mr. Montague had touched the sore.

Mr. Montague knew he had; knew his man.

"Don't let her make you the laughing stock of your circle, Mr. Schuyler, your club, for instance, and—"

Mr. Montague laid his cigar down and stood up. "You've got that woman's—never mind what she's done! —life in your hands. In reality you are asking *me* what to do with it? My answer is: whatever in Hell she is, remain her protector!"

Marcus indulged one of his silences. He was not so conventional now as—which is not too surprising—angry.

Mr. Montague, entirely conscious of this, was not daunted by it. He had faced much more dangerous ire than that of Marcus, which was protected by an unfailing deference to deportment. In his own library he would hardly strike, either verbally or physically. Marcus respected the home and guest within it at any cost, more especially if that guest followed the profession of spiritual adviser. He contented himself by eyeing Mr. Montague cynically.

"I would say," said that gentleman, making a kind of pulpit desk of Marcus' table by laying a hand on it, "that in talking to you Mrs. Schuyler made a desperate attempt to, in spite of you, hold on to her present position. That being the case it would be reprehensible in you to turn her out of it for the multitude to stone. Why don't you forgive her, obtain her eternal gratitude, and teach her to love you? You're a very handsome attractive man, Mr. Schuyler, but I believe up to the present time, while you've been getting a good deal out of matrimony, she's gotten precious little! Otherwise she wouldn't have betrayed you. Have you ever thought about *her* life, what being your wife meant to *her?* It's all very well to uphold matrimony as a sacred institution by which a man has unlimited rights over the acts of another individual. But I think the woman's happiness in marriage is of as much importance as her honour. I'd teach my wife to love me!"

"And," asked Marcus frigidly, "ignore her infidelity?"

"Exactly, just as you would—may already, for all I know—ignore your own."

"That is very remarkable reasoning, Mr. Montague."

"It's the reasoning, Mr. Schuyler, of Jesus Christ. It's the reasoning I've appointed myself to preach! Shall I tell you why I'm a minister? For some reason I became fascinated with Christ. His life took a strong hold on me. I wanted to expound it. I am trying to expound it to you. I am telling you exactly what I think, what I believe He, the Great Understander of human frailty, would have me tell you. Think it over, will you? There are times when it's better to forget than to remember. You have my advice. Will you take it?"

"It's out of the question!" exploded Marcus.

"Why? Are you too good a man to forgive? Is that it? If so, let me tell you I don't give a damn about good men: masculine morality isn't worth a damn anyway, but I do believe in strong men, and I think you've got a pretty good foundation to make of yourself a strong man. At present you're a pretty weak one, or you wouldn't be asking me for advice. A man must wrestle with his own soul, or wrestle to give his soul a chance! Do that! It's a big thing! Take a week, anyway, to think it over! Let me come back here one week from to-day! What do you say?"

"Week?" echoed Marcus blankly.

"Yes, and during that time do nothing."

"I don't just see," said Marcus vaguely, "to what end?"

"Just to see what will happen—happen to you I mean by the end of the week. A doctor calling in might tell you to abstain a week from meat. I'm your spiritual doctor. Abstain for a week from a decision. Will you?" Mr. Montague put out his hand. "I am speaking to you as a friend. But if you kick that little chorus girl out, send her on her way to Hell, you're not in my opinion worthy the friendship of any man. Why should you be surprised by what she did? Why should you resent it? Good-day, Mr. Schuyler."

Marcus found himself alone.

## CHAPTER X

For a full hour he stood, as Mr. Montague to whom—an astounding oversight for Marcus—he had not said good-bye, thought he would.

At the end of that time he seated himself in his desk chair and remained there. During the past half hour Marcus had become a thoughtful man. Mr. Montague had made of himself a kind of mirror reflecting Marcus, and some of the reflections had rather staggered him.

Were they correct reflections? Was he really—and this had nothing to do with his final disposition of Juanita; he was as vague as to that as before Mr. Montague's visit—the immoral blackguard that the minister had portrayed?

He coupled this portrayal with some of the things Juanita herself had said, while his eyes peered hard at the glass doors of a bookcase opposite his desk. It was as though these two had compared notes and Marcus found himself tremendously wrought up. He even dimly associated the minister—Marcus was really tremendously wrought up—in his mind with Juanita. The monstrousness of this idea almost alarmed him. He wondered if, along with all the other things he had been hearing of himself, it might not be added that he was insane.

Introspection had not been a part of Marcus' make up before. He found it not only astounding, the things one was able to dig up as to oneself, but disconcerting. He became distressingly uncomfortable, and all of a sudden he remembered that Juanita was the cause, the element of disturbance, and the fact, considering the relative importance of Juanita—Juanita and the Schuyler family—dumfounded him. His anger, positive and fierce, against her returned, and, as before, as on the night before, it ended in a burning desire to be in her presence.

This passed like the hot breath from a furnace one has walked quickly by, and he again concentrated upon himself.

To do Marcus full justice, the picture Mr. Montague had drawn of him was the surprise of his life, for not once had Marcus ever conceived of himself as any other than a perfectly correct gentleman, whether in or out of matrimony, and it had never occurred to him that his dealings with Juanita, or, for that matter, with the sacred institutions of matrimony, had been other than those befitting a correct gentleman, in fact, a Schuyler. He had been attracted to Juanita and had asked her, a polite procedure on his part, to be his wife, with the result that Juanita had accused him of being a brute, and the minister had declared him immoral.

It is perfectly natural that Marcus was astounded. It could not, in fact, have possibly been otherwise. Thus astounded at himself, and alone with himself, after a terrible thrashing, he was, perhaps he was, an object of pathos.

He got up, left the house, lunched nervously at the club, and, as though drawn there by his own misery and perplexity, returned home, and, of course, to the library. Here he remained beside a window overlooking a small plot of ground where stood an old tree and some leafless rose bushes until dinner was announced.

If he had hoped to find Juanita at table he was disappointed. He was called upon to dine alone, and the very fact that he was thus called upon—

Juanita's absence—thrust the whole situation of himself and Juanita rather cruelly upon him. He faced life with Juanita out of it, and there came over him—due probably to his prolonged absence from her—that low ebb-tide of self when self-respect, the consideration of conditions at all, seemed a hollow mockery in the face of inclination.

This, also recalling, as he quickly did, all Mr. Montague had said, embarrassed Marcus. Just as he had fled Juanita to battle with himself, he now fled Mr. Montague to grapple with the man Mr. Montague had introduced him to as himself. In other words, he decided to spend the week of indecision Mr. Montague had recommended in his mountain lodge as before.

In the morning a great surprise greeted him. A magnificent dog arrived as a gift from Mr. Montague. The dog, a splendid Russian wolfhound, shaggy and white as snow, wore a handsome collar. Attached to it was a card containing these words:

*"I am sending you a true and tried friend. Learn to love something. Begin on a dog."*

The first tears that Marcus ever remembered to have known filled his eyes as he laid his hand on the head of the beautiful animal.

At noon, this time unaccompanied by a servant, Marcus and the dog were on their way to the hunting lodge.

## CHAPTER XI

Marcus wrote a note, a rather constrained and awkward note—for he was not used to dealing with impulsive friendliness—to Mr. Montague, and got a letter from him, quite a lengthy letter, saying that the plan of going to the country alone was a ripping one, and that he really believed it would prove the most eventful week of his life. He had an idea, he explained, that Marcus would find that he had been carrying about with him all these years, without knowing it, a very much neglected and starved soul. He advised Marcus to dig for it.

That was the last news that Marcus received from the outside world. He cooked for himself and Mario—Mr. Montague had mentioned in his letter that that was the dog's name—and when not engaged in that occupation the two took walks, or he kept the wood fire going, and sat in deep thought with the dog at his feet.

Marcus did not exactly know whether he was learning to love the dog, but he could not doubt that the dog was learning to love him. It was a strange, new sensation to be followed about, to be appealed to for recognition by burning looks from steadfast eyes, to have his hands licked, and to be so familiarly dealt with as to have a chin laid on his knee.

And all this with no thought of reward or compensation.

Marcus had paid for what he had. He had, it seemed a bit strange to him, his eyes would flash suddenly, paid for Juanita. Suppose, and this was Marcus' first soul awakening, she had been given, presented to him by God as this beautiful animal had been presented to him by Mr. Montague!

It seemed rather stupid to Marcus, this reasoning about the dog, and Juanita, not exactly right, fair to either, but he wasn't able to rid himself of the idea. . . . It clung.

At the end of the week he had arrived at a conclusion as to Juanita.

He had done a great deal of thinking, so much thinking, in fact, that there were moments when he seemed to have been up there in the hunting lodge with Mario a hundred years.

He felt strange, unnatural, as though, at times, he were some cumbersome piece of machinery that was being wound up to begin active service. It almost seemed to him that he could feel the different parts of his brain awake as from a long sleep.

And then suddenly—Marcus supposed it must be his soul that Mr. Montague had spoken of, told him he had to

dig for—there came over him an intense longing to see Juanita, see her differently from what he had, and tell her he had forgiven her.

Marcus had never known so strong a desire before; he knew this because he felt illumined by it. The whole place was illumined. He got up and walked about in such agitation that the dog barked. Mario knew something important, very exciting, too, was in the air. He was even more convinced of it when the two sallied forth for the three-mile walk to the village, where there was a telegraph station. He would run ahead quite a distance, stand and bark, and then run back to Marcus and trot on knowingly by his side.

It was a cold, clear, beautiful morning, with ominous slate-coloured clouds making the heavens callously tragic. The slate-coloured clouds were full of snow. They had only to meet, merge into one, and Marcus felt sure there would be a heavy fall before night.

It did not deter him, however, after the bracing walk through an atmosphere clear, dazzlingly clear as a crystal, and nippingly cold, from sending the telegram to Juanita.

After asking her to come at once, he added he would wait in the telegraph office for her answer.

It came at the end of two hours.

Juanita's reply was that she would motor up the next day.

As Marcus stepped out he gave his attention to the clouds. They were becoming unfriendly, advancing towards one another rapidly with, as it were, pronounced and deadly intention.

When he and Mario reached home the entire heavens were overcast. All was sullen there. . . . They stood in a grey world.

## CHAPTER XII

Juanita arrived at sundown.

It had snowed hard all day until about an hour before, when suddenly the flakes ceased to fall, the heavens grew pale, and when the sun began to set the entire west assumed a shade of flaming gold. This gold was reflected on the white ground most dazzlingly, and the top of Marcus' lodge was also gleaming.

Marcus was standing in the doorway, sombre-looking still, it is true, but developed through a week of introspection and, in the end, high thinking, into a remarkably handsome man.

Mario was by his side and ran ahead of him, not too politely, to greet Juanita. He did this by quite a number of loud, sharp barks, an effort, no doubt, to declare to her that he was fully aware that she was the contemplated event that had caused his new, and by now highly valued, master his excitement of the day before.

## CHAPTER XIII

It was a strange environment, that is for her, to which Marcus had invited Juanita, and as she stepped indoors, a fur-covered little animal, she was alertly conscious of this.

It was not an ordinary habitation, this one set up here on the top of a high and desolate, one might say deserted, mountain. Marcus had left the planning of it in the hands of an architect, and it had been furnished, with not a suggestion from Marcus himself, by a person whose business it was to create suitable environment for people of wealth not blessed with temperamental tendencies, people who did not express themselves through their environment.

The place consisted of the very large, rather low-ceilinged, living-room with kitchenette dining-room off, and an attic for servants' quarters. The woodwork, much in evidence and that included beams, was dark and highly polished, resembling the shining striped or mottled skins of reptiles. These polished surfaces, which somehow seemed to smoulder, as if ready to burst at any moment into flame,—these, as well as brasses, mirrors in ebony frames, skins and other objects for Marcus' welfare,

were reflecting the fire-flames on Juanita's entrance.

"It is a black jewel set in a bed of pearls," thought Juanita—who was, as soulless people can be, imaginative.

Marcus' only boast, the only human boast Juanita had ever heard him make, was that his fifteen years as a huntsman had made of him, if nothing else, a good cook. Knowing the place to be well stocked with everything on earth, including a supply of wines, and that people came daily with game and steaks and other things, she rather looked forward to this repast — Marcus as cook and the handsome Russian chauffeur as waiter—as something, well, at any rate, novel. She saw Marcus through what he had, what he had to offer, as she ever had, and his reception had told her quite plainly that there was hope for the future.

She was almost sure of victory, and gave herself up to a comfortable sadness that isolation, physical fatigue, and a certain memory of Paul, Paul on the day she went to him for the last time—was it for the last time, thought Juanita a bit too hurriedly?—that the deep snow, lying so still and silent, in such a profound sleep outside, brought up.

Juanita was yet to learn that on the basis of his new-found soul Marcus was to make upon her an impossible, what she most surely would deem impossible, demand.

## CHAPTER XIV

Marcus as chef and host, with the handsome Russian chauffeur as waiter, proved all, and more, than Juanita, exacting as she was as to her entertainment, could desire.

When it was all over, and they were back in the living-room, Juanita, quite as still as Mario lying asleep on one of the rugs, listened to the story of a wronged man who saw himself in the wrong, a man who wanted to forgive and be forgiven.

Confronting not the Marcus he had always considered himself, a man practically above and beyond reproach, but the strange new man, without conscience, without honour even, who Mr. Montague had told him was himself, this had stirred Marcus, now that the time had come for him to speak, to an exaggerated sense of his own unworthiness. In proportion as he saw his own faults, Juanita's dwindled. They became, recalling Mr. Montague, his.

He told his story in the dull glow of wholly passive surroundings in a dull and almost passive way, held himself, his voice, manner, bearing, all in check, until he came to the demand upon Juanita that she was to find impossible.

The impossible demand, the request, was that she remain with him in this mountain lodge for six months, remain with him solely as his companion, while he tried to reach her soul and teach her to love him, love him for himself and not for what he had to offer as a part of himself.

They were seated in low leather armchairs in front of the fire, burned down, yet still giving forth a splendid warmth, with the glow of one crimson lamp, far away at their backs. Between this light and the fire, a pale moonlight flame lay on the floor, and as Juanita sat in silence she was conscious of the scene, that it penetrated and influenced her as the confession of Marcus had in no way done.

She had come here because the invitation was unique, suggestive, because a drama seemed in the air, a drama with her as successful star. Juanita was blessed—or shall we say cursed?—with an intelligence that forbade her deceiving herself. She knew, as she had always known, that the value of life, to her, lay in situations, emotions out of contrivance, and not out of spiritual development. To remain in this place, even with the knowledge that her future was safe, remain here as the price of that knowledge, was beyond her. It would, she felt,—and that marked intelligence of hers worked quickly—queer her with Marcus. He would become aware that she had no soul for him to reach, no love, such as he sought, to give. There were far more interest-

ing things, according to Juanita, than souls and their by-products, after all intangible, and he would become, as he sped on, aware of all this, her limitations, and so the fiasco.

It was characteristic of Juanita to be bold. She decided upon boldness, to be bold without being exactly certain as to where this boldness would lead her, or land her. She hoped it would land her —and that quickly—in her own yellow room at home, with Célestine at her beck and call, with either slippers or gowns in her hands, comfortably, splendidly so, in fact, in the centre of a great city with all its possibilities for adventure—danger.

In her heart Juanita still clung to her idea that it was danger that made life exciting. She became convinced of this one day when she took a long and very perilous automobile ride on a dangerous road. "To live," as she then said, "feeling that any moment may be your last, to gasp in fear, *is* living." The solitude of these safe mountains, with nothing to fear at all, not even Marcus, and with a dog to bark off the suggestion of any intruder, did not—even though she had confessed herself a sinner—appeal to Juanita.

She had no intention of allowing Marcus to overestimate her and thereby become, before the six months could possibly be over, disappointed in her. What she wanted of Marcus was to take her for what she was, stood for, take her on the grounds he had taken her. For that, considering the comforts involved, she was willing to pay the price—the old price.

"Marcus," she said finally, "what you have been telling me, all that you have told me, is very fine. I know that, not through any especial feelings that it has provoked, but because I know the world's standards of what being fine is. But that kind of thing, the fact that you have been noble, and have forgiven what, to you, was an unpardonable offence—of course, from the world's standards, those that you have lived by, it was that—doesn't appeal to me. If I remained up here with you in this desolate place for six months, since I really don't believe I have any soul for you to reach, or soul love to give, I believe it would separate us entirely. I am quite frank when I tell you this. I would rather, and you must not be shocked at this, be in your life on the old terms than on the new!"

She paused and as Marcus did not reply she fixed her eyes on his profile a bit curiously. It surprised her, the charm of it, how handsome it had become. It was almost sensitive. Why couldn't he be like Paul, bring wine in to lift them, they two, up there alone, into an evening of spiritual revels? It was only big people, thought Juanita, big, serious people like Marcus, who found that they had souls to stand between them and ethereal pleasures.

She decided to reveal herself to Marcus, tell him exactly what she was, and all he could ever expect of her, depending upon herself as she was, as she was this moment in this beautiful isolate spot, and also his memories of her.

"Marcus," she took up quietly, "in accepting your forgiveness, I repeat, all I have to offer you is myself."

"I want more than that, Juanita."

"But if there is no more?"

"There would be if," Marcus again associated her in his mind with Mario—the dog had learned to love him—"you could learn to love me. As I have told you, I am convinced that your fault is on my shoulders. I want you to lift that burden from me. I have learned so much during the past week that I want to teach to you. I have sat in the quietude of this place evenings just as you and I are sitting now, shocked as I recalled my past with you, my selfishness, my brutality, all the things you spoke to me of first, and that I have spoken of to-night."

"And that is the difference between us," said Juanita calmly. "I have never been shocked by myself, never could be. Any experience with me is an experience, something to be ignored when over and forgotten. Things do not make an impression on me, any lasting impression. I was impressed by

my experience with you in the beginning, but it was too strong an experience for me; it wore on me. I want the elusive, the intangible, that which has no real meaning, no substance, and," Juanita paused, "I want excitement. That's why I told you once I was afraid of life, my irresponsibility and love of excitement may lead me anywhere, that is—and this is very important, Marcus—except outside good taste."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Marcus, whose eyes had not left the fire.

He felt a tired man, a bit wearied, as one who chases a butterfly that continues to escape. He felt irritated out of proportion to the occasion, what had happened, without knowing that Juanita had dragged, was dragging, at the wings he had been growing, and through the aid of which he had soared to heights.

"What do you mean by that?" he repeated.

Juanita thought before answering.

"That with me," she finally said, "dissembling is a passion. All my life I have been a dissembler and without the opportunity to continue as one I would droop like an unwatered flower. The reason I tell you that I would never do anything in bad taste is that the physical delicacy of me, out of inheritance, early training, would forbid that. That is why you offended—"

"I beg of you not to speak of me. I am more interested, since we are arranging our future, that you speak of yourself."

He sounded with these words very much like the Marcus of old, and she burst forth: "I couldn't stay here—I really couldn't!"

"What about your being a dissembler?" asked Marcus.

"What is on the surface," Juanita answered, falling back to her calm, "doesn't interest me. I like to plan and contrive secret experiences, imaginary situations, like those I told you of when I was a slave and you were Nero. You remember."

"Yes."

"My first recollection in being punished for just such a thing was when I was seven years old. I remained out and went home and described a party I had been to, told what the other children wore, what was served for supper, all the details, and there had been no party. I hid all the evening in a stable to go home and tell about that party. And—"

"Yes?" inquired Marcus.

"This passion grew with my years until—"

Juanita paused, glanced at Marcus, looked about her excitedly, and then leaped into a supreme lie.

"Until?" asked Marcus, glancing at her.

"Until I lied to you on what I supposed was my deathbed."

"Lied?" exclaimed Marcus, turning in his chair to face her.

"Yes, every single thing I said to you that night was invention, fabrication, the ruling passion strong in death!"

In the future, when Juanita looked back, as she often did on this moment, she liked to wonder what impelled her, what had led her on.

Was she attempting by a supreme lie to re-establish herself in Marcus' opinion? Was she affording him the opportunity to be re-established in his own opinion? Was she really under the spell of an absolutely grand environment, what was outside, nature itself, and the soul influence that Marcus had spoken of, spoken of as to himself? Was she, for the moment, reaching up to the nobility of his plane, trying to save Marcus from her smallness and so save him for himself, for his new adventure into the heroic, take the stain off it for him, or was she again, once more, dabbling in her own nature, her passion for self-satisfaction? She never knew.

But whatever the belief of either, it was a brilliant stroke, for there are times when to establish doubt is more praiseworthy than to shoulder either a damaging truth or a damaging lie.

Marcus had made no reply, neither by word or movement. He sat per-

fectly still in the big chair, his hands hanging limp over the arms of it, his eyes on the fire.

"Marcus," she rather burst forth finally, "regard me as an incident in your life, a not too important one. I will surely become that. You are growing. I am not. I have reached the limit of what I am ever to be. I am probably at my best to-day. I have a remarkable brain, but I am not interested in developing it as you are developing your soul. I prefer—I've always thought of myself in this way—to be just what I am, developed by conditions and not by any effort on my part. Take me for what I am! I'm not so particular about your putting me on a pedestal. I would like you to deal gently with me. Fine china—I am that—cannot be roughly handled, or it will break under a touch, you know that. I very nearly broke, and it was not because I was offended, but because you didn't know—I am applying it to your treatment of me—fine china when you saw it. I resented that. I was a cup to you, that was all, and you never noticed the delicacy of it. I was lost upon you! My vanity suffered, my delicacy suffered. Perhaps I am wholly unmoral. I don't know. I don't care."

Marcus indulged another of his silences and she went on.

"Instead of lying about deceiving you I may even deceive you—I don't know, none of us does, what we may or may not do, but one thing I do know is that I shall never do anything openly to offend either you or the world. Whatever I do will be secret, subtle, something for me, without the approval or disapproval of others, something fragile. Even that will not be on any high ground, not at all, but simply because I was born fragile. I am the outcome of delicacy. You are grim, Marcus!"

"Yes, Juanita."

"I want to tell you something. It took what happened to you through me to make you find out that you had a soul." Was she clever again? That came up. . . . She did not know.

He turned to flash a glance at her.

"It is just because I can see into things, such a thing as that, that I find life so interesting. Because of me, strange as it may seem to you, your whole life is to be on a different plane!" Juanita believed now she *was* clever, felt herself so, and revelled in the excitement this kind of cleverness afforded her. Colour stole to her smooth, satin-like cheeks and burned them.

"Marcus!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Juanita."

"Some day you will love with that soul part of you that has had its birth through me. She will be an entirely different woman from me, oh, entirely different! I seem to see her, large, fair, with beautiful eyes. The moment you meet her you will adore her, and what I want to say to you is when that happens you are not to give me a thought!"

Juanita again wondered if she was clever, merely being clever, or if she had been drawn into those finer sensations that Marcus had discovered up here, and wanted to pass on to her. Again she didn't know. How *was* she to know? She looked at Marcus, studied him. *Could* she spend those six months up here? Spring would come—it was March now—and summer—flowers—Juanita's mind was travelling fast. Had Marcus believed her? Had he believed the lie she had told him? Or had he—Marcus might, he, also, had his inheritance—accepted it as the polite thing, offered her what she had demanded of him, the *noblesse oblige*, of taking her word?

For a long while Juanita sat in silence, occasionally glancing quickly at Marcus, and then away from him to think.

Juanita was thinking, thinking about her next step. She wanted things settled, comfortable. She wished again that Marcus was like Paul, that he would leave her silently and come back with wine for them to sip, and by its aid be drifted into imaginary realms. She wished he could take her hand and look at it as though some wonder lay in its contour, as Paul had. Juanita forgot

for a moment her surroundings, was out of them entirely, with her eyes fixed on her hand that Paul had once placed on a dark-blue velvet cushion that he had put on her knees, just to show her, he said, how beautiful a beautiful human hand was, when lying still upon velvet.

Her eyes had drifted to a mirror in which she could see herself faintly outlined. She saw this faintly outlined figure in Paul's surroundings, saw them back of her in the mirror. With a nervous turn of her eyes she came back to the present and Marcus, sitting as though he had fallen asleep. But Juanita knew that Marcus was not asleep. She could feel that he was wildly, intensely awake. He seemed helpless to her, helpless and filled with sorrow. Or was he merely thinking of the lie she had told him? Was he sitting there accepting it? If so, he was pathetic, and yet—she was afraid of him.

A thought came to her as she noted again how markedly handsome Marcus had become. It might be the environment, the particular place that suited him, or that she was away from all other men. Still, she was tremendously impressed by it, that, and that he was so calm, had grown so calm and thoughtful. There was a wonderful appeal to Juanita in this; not that Marcus had found his soul, she still contended that that did not interest her, but that he had found the power to be negative in her presence, negative and calm.

She regarded him from his head to his feet as though he were some half recumbent statue that had become her possession, some statue that would come to life if only she had the temerity to touch it. She wanted to touch him, lay her hand on his shoulder, if only to see him start. She was still afraid, though, like a little kitten that has been brushed from a chair several times with a pockethandkerchief, but that is waiting a chance to jump back.

She wanted to do something to break the spell of things. It was all too constrained. She was very tired, awfully tired, she thought, all day travelling in the snow. . . . If only she could lay her head on Marcus' still, quiet shoulder and just fall asleep, both of them. . . .

She got up very softly, like one fearing to awaken a sleeper, and very cautiously took a step that placed her in front of him.

Still he made no move, but Juanita could feel his eyes burning through her in their effort to remain upon the fire she had shut off from them.

At last he raised his head slowly and fixed those eyes, strangely tortured they seemed to her, in hers.

She answered the look by kneeling in his lap, the position that had been in her mind, and laying her very tired little head on his shoulder.

Her arm stole around his neck, but Marcus' arms remained taut, his hands hanging near the floor.

Mario awoke, came over, and looked inquiringly at the two.

WHEN you see a dashing young officer with a frumpy young woman on his arm, remember that he probably had the girl before the uniform.

SOME women believe in not marrying until they are twenty-five; others believe in not being twenty-five until they are married.

# THE STRANGE CASE OF CHALONER

By William Hamilton Osborne

## I

IT was Captain Bellamy—late of the Foreign Legion—who first directed my attention to the man.

"There he goes now," he cried, gripping my arm in his excitement, "the living exponent of—of what we were talking about."

As we had talked about everything under the sun, it was a little difficult to get Bellamy's meaning. But I realized the importance of the thing by the strength of his grip and the insistence of his manner.

"The very man," he went on, "the one and only Chaloner."

"The little chap with the bald head," I ventured.

Bellamy spluttered.

"Curses, no!" he cried.

"Not the big one with the sixty-inch waist."

"No," cried Bellamy, "the man with the iron grey hair. That's Chaloner."

"Oh," I returned, "the actor-looking fellow. I get you now."

"Actor is right," smiled Bellamy, satisfied, now that my gaze rested upon the exponent of something or other that we had been discussing; "Chaloner is an actor—a good one. He's a lawyer—a Philadelphia lawyer. Watch him. Handsome devil, eh? Size him up—what do you make of him, eh?"

It was Ladies' Night at the Barristers' Club in 44th Street. Dreary enough, too, if it hadn't been for Bellamy to listen to. Bellamy was the same old Bellamy, except—he'd lost his left leg somewhere on the Somme.

"What do you make of Chaloner, eh?" persisted Bellamy.

It was too easy. The man with the iron grey hair and the clear-cut features was surrounded on all sides by the fair sex. Besieged by a bevy of pretty girls. Getting away with it, too.

"What do you make of him," insisted Bellamy, "besides his being a good lawyer, and a good actor and such. What else?"

"A great ladies' man," I ventured, sure of my ground.

Bellamy shook his head.

"A woman's man—a great woman's man," he corrected, "that's Chaloner. Women, real women—they all fall for a man like him. He's a great orator—a great jury man, is Chaloner. Gets away with it. Same reasons. Audiences are feminine—all audiences are feminine. All juries are feminine. I mean men audiences—men juries. Individually they're masculine. Collectively, feminine. They take to a handsome fellow just like a woman. Magnetism! Chaloner's got it. Gad, he needs it. He's the one and only Chaloner—the living exponent of . . ."

"What *were* we talking about?" I mused.

And then I remembered.

I think I said awhile back that Bellamy had lost a leg on the western front. Poor chap, for him the war was over. At times he forgot they were still fighting over there. He was looking forward—always groping, like a man feeling his way through the dark. He watched for something—the millennium, I think. The great reconstruction period, he called it. He had it all doped out, especially for us here in this country. Everything was going to be on the level after the war. Not social-

ism, not that. Just good laws, decent people, brotherly sentiments. The greatest good to the greatest number—without the greatest number being number one. The sloughing off of the thousand and one petty little things that now and then had made life so mean for so many people.

Bellamy's whole thoughts were wrapped up in it all. After the war there'd be something new—some new order of events that would even make people forget that they'd lost legs, arms, eyes. Everything was to be right—nothing wrong. Arcadia—Altruria.

And to-night, just before he'd gripped my arm, he'd been going on about the terrific need of a National Divorce Law.

Seeing so many women about—talking to so many lawyers here in the Barristers' had evidently brought the subject to his mind. Bellamy's a lawyer. I'm not. He's very intense, Bellamy is. When he starts in on his subject, the thing he talks about is the only thing in the world just at that moment. He's wound himself up on the divorce evil—not the moral side, but the legal side of it. Tangled estates, children's rights tied up, alimony, new marriages, conflicting laws—everything higgledy-piggledy.

And his theme seemed so important that, listening, I had begun to think that perhaps Wilson could get Wilhelm to agree on some international divorce law and thus win the war. That's the way one felt, listening to Bellamy.

"There's Chaloner, now," went on Bellamy, like a lecturer putting a new slide into the lantern, "the one and only. . . ."

He'd repeated that one and only several times.

"Why one and only?" I demanded, "what's unique about him? There are hundreds of men of his type scattered over New York, let alone Philadelphia. Why one and only."

"Not hundreds like him—not *tens* like him," snapped Bellamy. "He's the one and only—he's unique. *He's the only man in America who's got two legal wives.*"

"Come again," I smiled.

"Get it hard," returned Bellamy. "The only man in this country with two legal wives—and, if you will have it, two sets of legitimate children."

"Two *living* wives?"

"Two living legal wives!" returned Bellamy.

"He's—not a Mormon," I faltered.

"That wouldn't help him," said Bellamy. "Bigamy and polygamy are barred in this country. Morally you can be a Mormon—legally you can't. Chaloner's not a Mormon. He's a Presbyterian."

## II

I SMILED incredulously. But I looked at Chaloner with added interest. Of course I felt Bellamy was talking enigma—the thing couldn't be as bald as he was stating it.

"If there's anything in this world that ought to get us a National Divorce Law," said Bellamy, "it's the case of Chaloner. The woman on the left," he went on, "is one of his wives."

She was a pretty woman—younger than he. Attractive. Wifely and motherly. Clear-eyed, good complexion, good figure. Fine enough for any man. Once and once only she looked our way and bowed to Bellamy. And then I saw the deep trouble that shone from those brown eyes of hers. Trouble—and wistfulness—and hope.

She glanced back at her husband Chaloner, and her smile was as winsome as a young girl's. But it was pathetic, just the same.

"Chaloner," I remarked, "knows how to pick women."

"Ah," said Bellamy, "this was the other way around. This woman picked him. She was infatuated with him—is yet. She closed in on him with all her dazzling beauty—she was a wonderful girl—and took him by storm. She's always been head over heels in love with him. She was Amy Worthing, old Judge Worthing's daughter. She's a thoroughbred, that girl. Chil-

dren—beauties, too. Three of 'em. They look like Chaloner."

"The lady on the right," I smiled, "is, I suppose, wife No. 2."

Belamy shook his head.

"This is Amy Chaloner, wife of No. 1, of New York," he said. "Wife No. 2 belongs in Philadelphia. She stays there. She was an actress, Edith Carter. Maybe you've heard of her. Chaloner married her some five years ago. Edith Chaloner of Philadelphia, wife number two."

"How did he get her?" I wondered.

"Ah," returned Bellamy, "easy! This time it was his infatuation. Saw the girl. Fell—couldn't help it. Love at first sight—love at second sight—love all the time. I'm not so sure she cares so much for him. But she married him—couldn't resist him at the start. He took her by storm just as Amy in New York had taken him by storm. So Edith Carter became wife number two. They have a little girl—looks like Edith—apple of his eye. You see how Fate's tangled all these people up."

"That," I returned, incredulously, "is just what I do *not* see."

## III

BELLAMY made himself more comfortable.

"An abstract principle doesn't always get to a layman," he conceded, "but a concrete case is apt to be dramatic. I'll tell you all about it. I must repeat. Here in New York this Chaloner was a young lawyer with a good money-making practice. Also he had inherited a considerable estate. That made it easier, perhaps, for the subsequent operations—and it enabled him, and still enables him to maintain his respectability, and his—er—separate establishments. It's all simple. He lived in New York, and he met Amy Worthing, who lived in New York, and Amy made violent love to him, and he married her and settled down into a young, happy, married life. All well and good—ideal husband, ideal wife, ideal family.

"One fatal night he took Amy, wife and mother, to see a Broadway musical comedy. There was something about one of the girls in the cast that caught his fancy—he couldn't keep his eyes from her. She wasn't any great shakes in that show—not a star at all. Just one of the rank and file. But she got him! Next night Chaloner, so the story goes, went to the theatre alone. The third night, somehow, he got acquainted with the girl. She was a very pretty young lady, with a good education and a clean record. She lived in Philadelphia. When Chaloner ran across her she was just about discouraged with her stage career. She felt that she had failed. She hadn't—she'd succeeded. For her stage career had led Chaloner straight to her.

"Chaloner took her home to Philadelphia. She was straight as a die, that girl. She fell in love with him, so she said, and she'd marry him when he was free. She thought nothing of the prospect of his being divorced from his first wife—the stage reeks with divorce. Chaloner's infatuation was intense. He wouldn't be satisfied until she was his—and the longer he had to wait the worse he got. He hovered about the girl all the while—spent week ends in Philadelphia—absented himself from his home in New York, until his wife Amy over there, and her good father, Judge Worthing, began to smell a rat. Amy didn't do anything, but Judge Worthing did. Chaloner, meanwhile as a blind, had opened a law office in Philadelphia, and will you believe it—the first day he hung out his shingle there, Edith Carter brought him some business—divorce business it was, involving one of her stage friends.

"Well, he ran two law offices in the two cities, but that didn't fool Judge Worthing. He hired his very best sleuth, and rounded up Chaloner. Then the next time Chaloner came home here in New York, the Judge tackled him. Amy couldn't."

"Any evidence?" I queried.

Bellamy smiled.

"Not a scintilla," he returned, "up-

on which to base a New York divorce. Chaloner was square enough with the facts. He told the Judge and Amy the whole story. He was infatuated with the girl and couldn't keep away from her. And the thing had been going on for a long while. But—they must remember this—there was nothing against the girl, and there wasn't any chance of there being anything against the girl.

"However, Chaloner, far from being on the defensive, started an offensive drive. He asked Amy and the Judge to start a divorce suit on Amy's behalf. He'd provide alimony, and he wouldn't defend the suit. And they could make up some pretext on which to base a decree. Well, even Judge Worthing wouldn't stand for a raw proposition like that—and Amy didn't want a divorce. She wanted Chaloner. So, no thoroughfare.

"Well, here's where Fate favoured Chaloner. You know how people do here in the East, when they want to get a divorce and haven't much of any grounds. They go to the Pacific Coast and get it. Why? Search me. Somebody booms a town out there by getting some rich woman to come out and start proceedings against her husband. Then everybody flocks to the celebrated divorce state to be fleeced. That's because they don't know the law. Chaloner was lucky. He had already established a sort of residence in Philadelphia—opened his office there, was actually doing business there. And as a matter of fact he was spending more time in Philadelphia than he was in New York. He had to—Edith Carter was there.

"Don't get to blaming Chaloner while I tell you his story. Chaloner is human. He couldn't help himself—something about Edith Carter had taken a grip on him and wouldn't let him rest. Well, he looked up the Philadelphia divorce act—had to do it anyway, for these friends of Edith's, and found—*what?* Found that Pennsylvania—right here, next door to New York—found that Pennsylvania is the happy hunting ground for divorces. If you want to get a divorce go to Pennsylvania. If your wife looks crooked at you you can get a divorce in Pennsylvania—or, you could, anyway, at the time Chaloner started in. Well, he started in! Amy, you remember, declined to get a divorce. So he started one against Amy, on any old ground at all. He got a servant or two to testify—they, swore to a lot of quarrels, and plenty of temper on Amy's part. What not—it was all after the discovery about Edith. And Amy was a woman scorned—hell holds nothing like it, and all that sort of thing, you understand. Maybe she threw something at him. At any rate, he started suit.

"Amy was devil bent, they say, to go to Pennsylvania and stop it. But old Judge Worthing wouldn't stand for it. He knew what he was about—and yet he didn't know what he was about. He wouldn't let Amy fight it, because, if she did fight it the Pennsylvania Court would get jurisdiction over her—and if she didn't, it wouldn't."

"I don't get that," I interrupted.

"Neither do members of the House of Representatives, nor of the Senate—nor does anybody else," wearily continued Bellamy, "it's a thing that people understand and marvel at when you explain it to them, but nobody actually believes. Everybody, you know, believes a divorce decree is simply a divorce decree, and lets it go at that. Now listen. I think I can make this so plain that even you can get this through your head."

"For this favour many thanks," I smiled, "I'll see what I can do."

"Now, listen, son," said Bellamy, "a law suit is a lawsuit, isn't it? Now then, suppose a man in Philadelphia had a claim against you, and he started suit against you in Philadelphia, how could he get judgment against you?"

"He'd have to serve me with a summons," I conceded.

"Evidently you've been served with one," he smiled. "All right. You're here in New York. He's started suit

in Philadelphia. How can he get service on you in an ordinary case."

"He can't," I faltered, guessing at the right answer, "unless I go to Philadelphia—or somewhere in the state of Pennsylvania."

"Right," returned Bellamy, "and the reason is that no man can be deprived of life, or liberty, or property, or rights of any kind, without due process of law. The court in Pennsylvania can't take snap judgment against you. It's got to get its finger on you first. You're entitled to your day in court. That's the ordinary case. And that applies to all the states. This is getting dry, I fear. . . ."

"Great Scott," I gasped, "don't stop now. . . ."

"Now," went on Bellamy, "listen to this. While in the ordinary case, the law requires that personal service of process must be made within the confines of the state, yet every state of the Union has got a neat little system of jurisprudence that applies to divorce cases, and others, but *particularly* to divorce cases. Every state has a method by which personal service of process within the state is not necessary—if your party resides out of the state you can get out an order of publication, publish a notice of it in the local papers, serve or mail a copy by registered mail to the defendant husband or wife in the other state. This order gives the defendant, we'll say, two months to answer the complaint. Now, perceive that here there is no service of process within the confines of the state. The court never puts its hand upon the defendant husband or wife. It merely publishes a notice directed to him or her.

"That is the course that Chaloner followed in his suit against Amy—a procedure old as the hills. A procedure that obtains in every state. Amy got the newspaper clipping, she received the papers by registered mail. She wept; she tore her hair. She packed her bag to start for Philadelphia and hire a lawyer. Old Judge Worthing, as I have said, stopped her. For he knew that if she went into Pennsylvania, she might be personally served with process there. He knew that if she employed a Philadelphia lawyer that lawyer would enter an appearance for her. He knew that if she fought the case, she would submit herself to the judgment of that court. In other words, in any event she would place herself under the Pennsylvania jurisdiction. This, Judge Worthing determined, should not be the case."

"Why?" I queried, still as puzzled as before.

"Because," said Bellamy, "he was not only her father. He was her counsel. He didn't purpose having Chaloner get a divorce from Amy. It was his intention, if there were any divorce to be had, that Amy should get it, *not* Chaloner. Alimony and support for the children meant dollars and cents to Judge Worthing, and although Chaloner was mighty fine and liberal with his money, the Judge intended to nail him, for Amy's sake, and nail him hard! And I'm willing to say he started out the right way to do it.

"Amy didn't go to Philadelphia, and she didn't submit herself to the courts of the state of Pennsylvania, and Chaloner got his divorce—a divorce, you perceive, based upon service which was not personal service of process within the state. He got his first decree and he got his final decree—and then he married Edith Carter.

"I get that," I admitted. "Then he was divorced from Amy. . . ."

"By the Pennsylvania court," agreed Bellamy.

"And," I went on, "therefore she was no longer his wife. . . ."

"In Pennsylvania," interposed Bellamy, "she wasn't. . . ."

"And he married Edith Carter."

"In Pennsylvania," remarked Bellamy.

"And she became his lawful wife."

"In Pennsylvania," placidly added Bellamy.

"Why nag on me all the time," I complained, "by persistently tagging on this Pennsylvania addendum?"

"Because," returned Bellamy, "it's vital. You'll soon see why. Now give me your conclusion. Who was Chaloner's legal wife?"

"The Philadelphia girl," I said.

"All right," went on Bellamy, "you are right, in Pennsylvania. Why are you right? Because, following the legal procedure in Pennsylvania, Chaloner, observing all the Pennsylvania forms, had obtained a decree of divorce from Amy. The Pennsylvania court recognized its own decrees. But there's trouble somewhere."

"Where?"

"In New York, for instance. And New York is only for instance. We'll take New York because Amy lived here and still lives here. New York steadfastly declines to recognize that decree."

"Why?"

"New York declines to recognize any decree of any other state that is not based upon personal service of process within the confines of that state, or where the defendant has not submitted to the jurisdiction by appearing in the suit personally, or by attorney, or by litigating the matter. Do you get that?"

I began to smell a rat, as they say in the books.

"I think I do," I said faintly. "They deny that the other state ever got jurisdiction over this woman, who was a citizen of New York state."

"Exactly," smiled Bellamy, patting me on the shoulder in approval. "She has been deprived of her rights without due process of law. New York will not recognize the divorce decree of another state where that decree is obtained only after service of process pursuant to an order of publication. There's nothing unusual in that attitude. There are other states that follow her example—several others."

"Look here," I said.

I picked up an evening paper. It was a New York paper. Tucked away in one corner of it were three or four notices of publication in as many divorce suits. I had read them often. I showed them to Bellamy.

"New York," I said, "grants divorces based upon service by an order of publication."

Bellamy's eyes shone with delight.

"Of course," he howled, "of course New York does."

"Doesn't New York recognize her own divorce decrees?" I persisted.

"Of course New York does."

"Even those granted only where service is pursuant to an order of publication?"

"Of course New York does." Bellamy became quite uproarious. "*But New York won't recognize Pennsylvania's decrees granted under similar circumstances.* Not by a jugful! Nor will many other states. They all have the same methods of service—they all swear by those methods—they recognize those methods, when used within their own borders, as the finest things in the world. But they decline to recognize those methods when adopted by any other state. It's a muddle, eh? Puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer? I should say! That's why we've got to have a National Divorce Commission, son."

"But let's get back to Chaloner. Down in Philadelphia, you'll remember that he's got his decree of divorce and he's married Edith Carter. That's where we left off. Now about Amy."

"What did she do?" I asked.

"She got mad as the devil. Chaloner was now actually living with his Philadelphia wife. That hit Amy hard. She couldn't stand a thing like that. Chaloner was her man, don't forget that—not anybody else's. So, now, she let Judge Worthing do his worst."

"What could Judge Worthing do?" I queried.

"Everything—now," said Bellamy, smiling. "Here's where he shone. Get the situation! Amy lived in New York. Down in Philadelphia Chaloner was living with Edith. In Philadelphia, Edith was his wife. But New York would have none of it. New York said Chaloner never was divorced, because the Pennsylvania courts never had jurisdiction over Amy. Therefore

his divorce was no good. Therefore, he wasn't divorced. Therefore, Amy was still his wife. Therefore, she could bring suit against him in New York for a divorce. . . ."

"On what grounds?"

"On the simple, easy, statutory ground that he was living with a lady not his wife. You get that? Judge Worthing brought the suit, proved the facts—they were easily established, and obtained his first decree. This is known as the interlocutory decree. This decree does not divorce the parties. It merely establishes that they are entitled to a divorce and that the plaintiff, Amy in this case, could get a final decree a few months later by making application—if nothing happened in the meantime to defeat her rights. So Judge Worthing got this first decree. And this first decree, by its set terms, completely nullified and bowled over the Pennsylvania decree—that is, nullified it in New York."

"Why not in Pennsylvania?"

"Because," said Bellamy patiently, "the New York courts don't happen to have jurisdiction over Pennsylvania!"

"Was Chaloner," I asked, "personally served with process in New York in Amy's suit?"

"Bless you, yes," said Bellamy. "He had a law office here. They served him. He defended the suit, set up the Pennsylvania decree, and had it knocked flat. Oh, yes, they got jurisdiction of him all right—here in New York. That's a mere detail. But the interlocutory decree in New York declaring the Pennsylvania decree to be void is just so much waste paper in Pennsylvania. You get that? So would the final decree be. However, we've got this Pennsylvania decree regularly knocked on the head in New York, and we've got Amy's grounds for divorce sustained, and we've got her entitled to a final decree in a few months."

"And then?"

Bellamy grinned professionally.

"The final decree," he went on, "was never entered."

"There was some cause for its not being entered?" I queried.

"Much," he answered.

"Son," he then proceeded, "this is a story of real human beings and attractive human beings. I started out by telling you that Amy was infatuated with this man Chaloner. She was blindly, unreasonably in love with him. She believed that at heart he was in love with her. She considered this Edith Carter business only a passing fancy. She had all her life before her—all her life and Chaloner's. And in New York she was his legal wife. . . ."

"Oh, yes," I interposed, "I see that now. She was his legal wife. And the Carter girl no longer was his wife."

"Not so fast," said Bellamy, "let me go on. Amy loved this Chaloner to distraction. They had these wonderful children. She went to see him—she got down on her knees to him—she made all the pleas there were to make—duty, his duty, among others, And she was his wife. New York said she was his wife. Well, son, Chaloner is a complex personage like the rest of us. He went back to his New York home. He lived with Amy—part of the time. That being so, no final decree could be entered. How could it be, when the parties had come together again—were living together? But the old interlocutory decree is still on record—and anyway, decree or no decree, New York doesn't recognize Chaloner's Philadelphia divorce. In New York, Amy is Chaloner's lawful wife. Why shouldn't he live with her?"

"Then the Carter girl is out of it?"

"Not at all," vigorously protested Bellamy. "Bless us, son. Didn't I tell you that Chaloner is human, and furthermore, that he's hopelessly infatuated with Edith, his Philadelphia wife—"

"But that divorce of his was declared no good," I protested.

"In New York it was," he returned. "In New York he's still married to Amy. But, bless you, Pennsylvania recognizes that decree that Chaloner ob-

tained. The divorce decree obtained by him in Pennsylvania being valid in Pennsylvania, he was free in Pennsylvania, and his marriage to Edith there was valid. And he's infatuated with Edith, his Pennsylvania wife. So in New York he lives with Amy, his New York wife. She, poor girl, never mentions the Philadelphia situation. She believes that time will cure his infatuation. She wants Chaloner, and she wants him among those present when somebody asks for the father of his children. And he acquiesces. He's content."

"What has Edith, of Philadelphia, got to say?" I queried.

"She asks no questions—perhaps she doesn't care. She's proud of him, and she has a deep respect for her position as his wife. She in content to shut her eyes. She's not infatuated, like he is—not infatuated as Amy is, you see. So she's content. But she sticks to Pennsylvania. She rarely comes to New York, or goes anywhere else outside of her home state."

"Why?"

"Because," sighed Bellamy, weary with explanation, "in Pennsylvania she is Chaloner's wife. In New York she isn't. In Pennsylvania her little girl is Chaloner's legitimate heir. Elsewhere she isn't. For the same reasons Amy never ventures into Pennsylvania. She can go anywhere else with impunity. But the instant she crosses the border into Pennsylvania her status changes and remains changed until she gets out of Pennsylvania again. Her children would be worse than nobodies inside of Pennsylvania. That's the strange case of Chaloner. Haven't I told you that he is unique? Perhaps the only man in the country with two legal wives at one and the same time."

I thought about it.

"All right," I said at length, "that's because both these women are complaisant. Either one of them could start suit for divorce to-morrow."

"They can, but they don't," said Bellamy. "I've explained why. So long as they don't, he's a man with two legal wives. Legal, mind you. No frumpery about it. Lawful wives. Get it hard!"

"But," I still protested, "why doesn't the law step in and put a stop to it?"

"Ah," smiled Bellamy, "now you do the talking, son. Tell me: *How* is the law going to stop it?"

"He's committed bigamy, hasn't he?" I demanded.

"If he's committed bigamy," returned Bellamy, "the crime was in contracting the second marriage—in going through the ceremony with Edith Carter."

"Right," I said, doing the talking, "right! And New York can arrest him for that."

"Think," returned Bellamy. "Criminal law, man. How can New York arrest him for an act committed in Pennsylvania? Or if it arrests him by mistake, how can it try him for an act committed in Pennsylvania? It can't. Even you know that."

"Well, then," I said, "it can turn him over to Pennsylvania and let Pennsylvania try him.

"For bigamy?" smiled Bellamy. "Nix on that. Under the laws of Pennsylvania? Why, he hasn't committed any crime in Pennsylvania. His marriage with Edith in Philadelphia took place only after he was freed by a Pennsylvania court."

"But he's living with two women," I spluttered, "two women that he claims to be his wives. They can't both be his wives."

"They are," returned Bellamy, positively. "Put it up to old Judge Worthing if you want to. He'll tell you that they are."

"There are laws," I went on. "He can be arrested for living either with one of them or with the other."

"Put it to the test," said Bellamy. "It's crime you're talking about. A man must be tried in the state where

the crime is committed. The crime you mention—that is, living either with Amy or with Edith, is committed in one of two states. He can't be indicted in New York for living with Amy. Hang it, she's his wife. He can't be indicted in Pennsylvania for living with Edith. Hang it, she's his wife."

"Hang the state law!" I exclaimed. "There ought to be a Federal law, then, that would reach the situation."

"That," grinned Bellamy, seeing now that the thing had got under my thick hide, "that is what I've been howling about for the last fifteen years. After the war is over the strange case of Chaloner ought to get us what we need — a National Divorce Law, son."

IV

THAT elongated conversation took place some months ago. I was reminded of it yesterday when I saw a death notice in a New York paper. It was the death notice of Chaloner. He had dropped suddenly, with apoplexy, in the State House in Trenton, New Jersey, about half-way between his respective homes. There was nothing unusual about the death notice. But at its end it carried this one line:

*Notice of funeral hereafter.*

I showed it to Bellamy.

I looked at Bellamy and he looked at me.

We could appreciate the difficulty there might be in determining just where the funeral of Chaloner should be held. Also, by whom his property would be enjoyed.

# LOVE

## By Kirah Markham

LOVE, take my hand,
I cannot see the way.
Behind me where I stand
Lies yesterday.
Before me where I stray
Stretches an unknown land.
I cannot see the way,
Love, take my hand.

Love, be my eyes for me.
Mine are so blind.
I would go trustingly
With humankind.
I fain would seek to bind
Wounds that my heart can see.
But oh my eyes are blind.
Love, be my eyes for me!

# THE SOCIALIST

By Patrick Kearney

DURING his first year in college he joined a fraternity. He enjoyed the life immensely for a while, until one day a commoner with a red shirt and horny hands struck up an acquaintance during a Philosophy lecture.

When he went to the fraternity house that evening he asked: "Is it fair that we should have all the joys of refined social intercourse, while men with red shirts who chew tobacco are debarred? Why is this?"

No one was sober enough to think of any reason, so he left the fraternity and joined a Commons Club.

"Fair play," he cried. "They, like me, should have rights. They are only trying to live, and we are equal!"

Negroes were not admitted to the Commons Club. One day he met a bright young black studying Theology. He wondered why this man should be refused admittance. When the answer was given he left the Commons Club and began writing articles on "The Negro—A Man and a Brother."

"Fair play" was again his cry.

In his third college year he took a course in Zoölogy, and discovered that man was not so far removed from the ape as he had thought.

"Only superficial differences," he mused. "We are both mammals, after all. Why should apes be kept in cages while I am permitted to roam at large?" So he started a society for the Liberation of the Simidæ.

Later in the Zoölogy course he discovered that, since rabbits were mammals like himself, it was cruel to use them for dissection purposes. He became an anti-vivisectionist and a vegetarian. Because the professor in charge of dissection could not see his point, he dropped the course and took up Biology.

In the Biology course he probed more deeply into the evolution of living organisms, and discovered that all forms of life were more or less connected, differing only in point of development. This interested him greatly, and in the evenings when little roaches ran about his room he refrained from killing them.

"They are a lower organism, that is all," he said. "Why should I live and they die? Fair play!"

At this time he contracted smallpox. Studying his disease, he learned that it was caused by the attempt of certain organisms, name unknown, to obtain a livelihood in his recesses.

"This is fair enough," he said. "They, like me, are only trying to live. Fair play!"

He died as he had lived, a beautiful Christian character, and the city in which he was born erected a great monument to him as a vigorous and sincere combatant for universal justice.

# SHANGHAIED

By Ben Hecht

IT was on this park bench that he had sat a summer night five years ago and with all the shrewdness and prophecy at his command decided that life without Helen would be a senseless, a miserable and unlovely thing. He sat now and looked at the elaborate mystery of trees in the night and lanes that hid themselves behind the lilac bushes along the broken edge of the lagoon. Here and there on a distant bench, striping the moonlight with its lathes, sat solitaries like himself, their figures folded into vague semblances of the figure 4. There were couples, too, men and women sitting close together, their embraces hidden by the dark, and each imagining that life without the other would be a senseless, a miserable and an unlovely thing.

Bennett smiled disparagingly at nothing in particular unless it was his thoughts or the world perhaps.

"Five years ago I fancied I couldn't live without her. And now I no longer love her and I doubt if she actually loves me. I haven't loved her for the last three years. I doubt, hang it, whether I ever loved her at all. And yet, good lord, I sat on this same silly bench five years ago, determined to kill myself if she didn't give me the radiant privilege of living with her for the rest of my life."

Ah, the dolorous irony of life! Each day a mockery of yesterday's dreams!

Bennett lighted his pipe with the theatrical calm of a philosopher in the throes of inferior tragedy. "The snows of yesteryear" motif, though a theme somewhat old, was yet worthy of sapient speculation. Indeed, what else was there in life worthy the meditation of a philosopher? The roseate lies that had bloomed in the depths of his heart, the passionate masquerade that had tricked the processes of his reason, the delicate guillotine of the years that changed men into cadavers and all things into memories—a bit hackneyed to be sure, such contemplations, a trifle rococo for the mental operations of one whose name had become a synonym for vast and profound unfoldings of the spirit. Yes, sorrow had a way of intruding its platitudes, where only genius trod. There was no escaping the wan pathos of the fact that five years ago he had—

He had allowed his pipe to go out.

Undoubtedly the thing wasn't drawing well. The habit of truth, so necessary to a philosopher, informed him, however, that the pipe was drawing as well as it ever had. Why not confront the fact of the matter? The thing had gone out for the sheerly natural reason that he had forgotten to smoke it after lighting it. The little pyramid of flame held his eye as he rekindled the tobacco with another match.

For a moment he studied with an impersonal air the trembling of his hand and arm. Yes, he was a bit nervous. The thoughts that he had been thinking had come so naturally to him that he had, for the instant, overlooked their overwhelming revolutionary character. It had just dawned on him that he was thinking of separating from Helen. Strange he should be able to think about it for almost a half hour so coolly and calmly and then suddenly feel that the idea had entered his mind for the first time only an instant ago. Was he, as a matter of fact, actually thinking this thing, actually deciding to do what he

was thinking of doing, or merely playing with the thought of it, boasting piquantly to himself?

With a gentle flourish of his hand Bennett endeavoured to extinguish the match in his fingers and raising his eyebrows he blew at the flame slowly and solicitously. He remained puffing enigmatically upon his pipe—enigmatically in the manner of a man sparring with himself for time to face the truth. Well, he might as well stand up and walk about a bit. It was somewhat chilly. Bennett smiled. He passed his long hand over his lean face. Why these inane subterfuges? He loathed walking and it was a splendid night for doing just what he was doing—sitting quite motionless on a park bench. Sitting quite motionless and thinking this thing out to the end, once and for all. He raised his eyes and stared at the sweep of darkness above him. As he stared his thought drifted again into the past with the gentle persistence of a man who prefers the idle caress of sorrows to the more strenuous attentions of logic and decisions.

Yes, if someone had told him five years ago as he sat in this very place that there would come a time while he was still young and possessed of his health that he would look upon Helen as the most boring and unnecessary asset in his life, he would have snorted as at the vapourings of a darkened mind. Was he then still young? Thirty-five. The whole rub of the situation lay in the fact that he no longer loved this particular person whom he had once loved and . . . selah! Oh, most obvious of all retrospections—he had observed her once through the obfuscating mists of desire. She had appeared to him then. . . . But why go over it, why harry himself with such useless pryings into tombs?

Gently his thought again escaped his will, and busied itself dolorously with the contemplation of things of the past.

How deceived he had been first of all in her mind, in her character! Well, he had learned to some bitterness that bobbed hair does not necessarily argue a lengthened spiritual reach. What a radical little spitfire he had in his insane blindness fancied her! A little cherubic head bristling with frantic notions of life. A passionate seraph stuttering gloriously of revolt. My, yes. Revolting against this and against that, jumping up and down on the bourgeoisie; the poor, intellectually trampled to death bourgeoisie.

"Life is something bigger than all this . . . all this snatching greedily at trifles. Life is a . . . a dancing star, a glorious pageant. Oh, it's so tragic to see men and women piling themselves with conventions until there is nothing left for them but to stagger through . . . stumble through with their eyes to the ground. Life is an adventure of the emotions. . . ."

And so it is, so it is. He smiled suddenly at this verbatim echo of the past. Life was, perhaps, all that she had in her ignorance proclaimed it to be. It had, at any event, greater possibilities than spending the rest of one's days virtually closeted with a fussy, ill mannered, irritating little shrew. Again Bennett's thought extricated itself from the present and floated into memories. She had undoubtedly had talent—the precocious and incomplete talent of the intellectual woman. Her painting had not been so bad at first. At least it had been better than the meaningless daubs which littered the house now.

The sound of someone walking down the gravelled path which led by his bench caused Bennett to raise his eyes. A man and woman were approaching, arm and arm, heads inclined together. With a tolerant smile Bennett watched them pass. As they disappeared in the dark he was off again on elaborate theorizings of the sex instinct—the fantastic rigamarole of phrase and sigh and self deception that accompanied the simple function of mating.

What a deceit the whole of it! What a merciless ruse of nature! Thus they had walked, he and Helen, thus embraced with heads thus inclined. And they had come to the edge of the lagoon and remained spellbound before the

dark and languid water. And they had solemnly taken each other by the hand and with an asinine profundity called upon a mysterious thing they referred to as God to witness then and there the union of their souls and their lives. No blithering priest to mumble words at them, no asthmatic organ to gurgle its Mendelssohn benediction, no half-witted friends to pelt them with rice and shoes. Just a fine, simple communion of radical souls, a frank and natural mating of spirits attuned. That had been their wedding.

Bennett thumped the ashes out of his pipe and laughed softly. His thought had suddenly slid out of the warm and enervating ruts of memory. He arose and shook down his trousers. He wasn't married. Delightful and indisputable fact. Holding hands over the lagoon on a summer night and panting some gibberish about souls and the higher life, fine and noble as it had appeared, did not in the sordid eyes of the law constitute matrimony.

With decided steps Bennett made his way out of the park. Why the pother and the doubt about it? He had mated with Helen as man to woman and not, in her own words, as one social unit with another. He was, by the terms of their own curious ceremony, free to depart when his finely attuned spirit cracked a bit under the strain. Well and good. He would depart. The finely attuned blamed foolishness had cracked. And if she saw fit to make a fuss, as she undoubtedly would, he would lead her solemnly down to the lagoon and holding her firmly by the hand call upon the selfsame Deity who had witnessed their union to witness now its severance. And finis! The thing would be accomplished in a logically idiotic manner.

In the manner of a true philosopher he had considered everything but the obvious in seeking a way out of his dilemma. The street was quiet and empty. Eight blocks to his home, but he would walk them, as much as he loathed walking. There was come to him an exultation. He desired to indulge it. The thought of being freed from the senseless chatter of the woman even now awaiting him, of being rid of her persistent demands and shrewish cajolings had about it a magical quality. It transformed for him every colour of his future. Life was an adventure of the emotions—when lived properly. Egad, he would feel like a new man, like a creature reborn.

Already he felt an influx of vigour. His body seemed mysteriously straightened, his thought virulently alive. There was no mistaking it—the creature was a blanket on his mind, a darkness to his eye, a weight upon every sensitive fibre in him. They had had their happiness. They had exhausted for each other all each had to give. Why prolong the anti-climax into the insufferable monotony of a lifelong partnership? He wasn't, after all, an ordinary man. He had his work, his genius. Good Lord, if she couldn't see the common sense of the thing he'd drag her down to the lagoon and mumble the gibberish of five years ago and do the thinking for both of them. It would, undoubtedly, make a woman of her and give her a chance. Not that there was anything in her. But it would give her her chance to pose again as the lofty-minded radical, to parade once more her institutional chatter about free womanhood and fine living.

There was a light in the window. Bennett crossed the street and approached it firmly. She would listen politely enough. She would think the whole matter merely another argument. Well, it wouldn't take her long to wake up to the facts. He would be blunt. There was no use in wasting either rhetoric or epigram. The thing called for fine clean cuts.

He entered the room and observed with an ironical smile that she was reading thoughtfully and slowly "The Theory of the Leisure Class."

She raised her eyes as he walked in silence to a large chair opposite her. Her face, under the lamplight, was firm and youthful. Her black hair, bobbed beneath her ears, added, as always, a

roguish air to her appearance. Smiling back at her, Bennett went slowly about the business of refilling and lighting his pipe.

"Have a nice walk?" she asked at length. "You were gone long enough."

Yes, the slave had exceeded his furlough—an hour each evening.

"No, I didn't walk much. I went down to the park and sat around a bit."

"You might have done your sitting around here with me."

So he might. Exquisite privilege. He smiled at her again and then—clearing his throat portentously, requested:

"Put the book aside, please. I've something rather important to talk about."

She hesitated and then, with the air of one preparing for elaborate argument, slowly inserted a book mark between the pages and placed the book on the window seat.

"What is it, George?"

He hesitated an instant.

"Before I begin," he said, "I want you to promise that you'll wait till I'm all through before you say anything. I want you to understand that I'm not arguing but simply stating certain facts, certain things that are as inevitable as . . . as doom."

She looked at him fixedly. He returned her stare without wavering.

"Do you promise?"

"Yes."

Did she know already? A curious mildness had come into her voice.

"Very well, Helen. I've decided that you and I have come to the end of our rope. I mean, that all things considered, the best thing we can do is to separate. I've been thinking of it for six months—if not longer. Our lives have degenerated into a monotonous exchange of unimportant trifles. We bore each other. Our intimacy has lost its charm. In short, we no longer care for each other. I couldn't say this sort of thing to any woman but you. That is, I mean, *you* will be able to understand, if you don't understand already and haven't understood for the last year. When we mar—when we came together it was with the high purpose of living a . . . an exalted companionship. I don't have to point out to you that our companionship in the last two years has been neither high nor exalted. Do I?"

He paused, somewhat taken back by her continued silence.

She had sunk into her chair and was staring at him with head lowered and eyes raised.

"Are you agreed, Helen? Do you see what I mean? It's hard, I know. But things change. Everything changes. What we had to-day we have not to-morrow. I mean, our love that once seemed so . . . so eternal was, like everything else in life, fleeting. If we would be true to that love . . . true to the fine things in ourselves, we must part. If only not to mar further that which has been. . . ."

He paused again, somewhat bewildered. Try as he might, he couldn't keep the gloat out of his voice. And he had no desire to gloat. He wished to be fair and decent. He stammered for a moment. There was a way of putting the thing calmly and sanely without resorting to this empty sounding rhetoric.

"Helen," he demanded, "what . . . what do you think? Anything I might add would be only repetition. Had I felt that you loved as you once did, that it was still the same for you, I would never have spoken. But I've seen the change in you. A change as complete as that in me."

His hands were trembling insanely as they rested on his legs. Bewildered by her unbroken silence he plunged on desperately.

"Habit—that's all there is left between us. The habit of being together, of seeing each other, touching each other, depending upon each other. Is that something worthy? Is that on a par with your ideals? Tell me."

He arose from his chair and walked over and stood beside her. Her eyes did not follow him. They remained staring at where he had sat.

"Helen," he said softly, "come. I'm serious about this. It's for both our good. Don't you see? There's nothing to hinder us, you know. We've tried . . . and we've failed."

Why drag that in—the trying and failing? It had a dangerous ring to it. He bit his lip.

"Come," he commanded again, this time with an increased tenderness. "Tell me. Am I right?"

He became silent and waited. She would begin now. He had tricked her. He had lured her away, used her and now wanted to throw her aside like an old glove. That was her reward for trusting him, marrying him upon his honour rather than submitting to the artifices of convention.

In his mind as he waited whirled her arguments—the inevitable arguments of womankind. He smiled firmly. At least she would see herself as she actually was in these words. She would see herself for the ordinary, stupid and conventional parasite that was her soul.

"Come, Helen, I'm waiting."

The woman beside him arose slowly to her feet. Her face had become drawn. It looked almost old and curiously beautiful in the lamplight.

"It's hard, Helen, I know. But . . . it's for the best. We mustn't falter because of . . . of . . ."

She interrupted him with a gesture.

Placing a hand on his shoulder, she raised her eyes and stared into his face. Her eyes were luminous with tears.

"Don't," she said.

Dropping her hand from his shoulder she walked slowly out of the room toward their bedroom.

"Don't what?"

Bennett turned and pursued her with the question.

"Do you mean you don't want me to leave, Helen? Wait. Listen a moment. Don't you understand? If you mean that, say so, and we'll . . . we'll talk it over. . . ."

He was addressing an empty room. An irritation seized him.

"If that's all you have to say," he cried angrily, "why, the matter is closed. There's only one thing for us. And that's ending it. Each going his way. Do you hear?"

He waited for several minutes. No sound came from the adjoining room. Perhaps she was weeping. He strained his ears for a sound of it. Silence. A coldness passed through him. He remembered suddenly that his razor blades were in the room. She might . . . might do something.

"Helen," he called.

He walked quickly after her. The bedroom was dark. Thrown across the bed, he could make out her figure. He approached and touched her on the shoulder.

"Please, Helen, we've got to settle this. No hysterics. You're too big a woman to have hysterics . . . on such an occasion."

He tugged firmly at the shoulder.

A wan voice answered.

"What do you want of me? Go away."

He sat down carefully on the bed.

"Not like this, Helen. If you'll only listen."

"I've listened. Please. Don't repeat it."

He hesitated. A strange bewilderment had overtaken his thought. He desired to know what she thought. It would be impossible to leave without knowing this.

"Are you agreed," he stammered. "If so . . . come. We'll go down to . . . to the lagoon and, and . . ."

He stopped. She was crying. With her face buried in the coverlet she had started sobbing, her body shaking, her fingers clutching wildly at the spread.

Why the devil had he mentioned the lagoon! It had undoubtedly set her off. It was at the lagoon they had stood a summer night five years ago, holding each other by the hand, vowing to the silence and the dark. . . .

"Helen, please! Don't cry. You'll only make it worse. . . ."

His hand patted her shoulder timid-

ly. A heart-broken little sentence drifted from the depths of the bed.

"I've been such a fool, oh, such a fool!"

"No, you haven't. You've been . . . been splendid. It's only something we can't help—either of us. It's the way things work out. Beyond our control. Beyond our vision. Come, now, don't cry. We'll talk about it."

"Such a fool. Oh, God!"

"What do you mean, Helen?"

The increased sounds of her sobbing were his only answer. He sat in the dark of the room waiting. Within him something mysterious, something inexplicable welled slowly to the surface. It passed into his throat, into his eyes, warming his body and confusing his thought.

"Helen," he murmured. "Don't think that. We loved each other . . . once."

Yes, they had loved once. Once she had been for him everything that was desirable. To see her walking in the street was to behold all the beauty of life. To feel her arms upon him was to know all the happiness of the world. What transports, what exultations! They were still in the room, come now to stare with wan eyes at him. Their memories were still keen in his heart. Dead things that had, nevertheless, souls.

His hand slipped under her shoulder.

"Helen," he whispered.

Tears stopped him. An odd, unexpected grief had come over him. Tears moistened his face. At the feeling of them the last bit of his reserve dissolved. Tears fell upon his hand, his tears. He leaned over and caressed the soft hair of the woman's head. He pressed his tear-wetted cheek against her temple. They remained weeping togther for several moments. Then a hand crept into his. Her voice, broken and far away, murmured:

"Don't cry, George. It . . . it can't be helped. If your . . . your love is dead. . . ."

The hand in his slipped gently, weakly out of his grasp. He felt a violent laceration as its finger tips fell from his palm.

"It was so beautiful . . . so wonderful. But go, please . . . I can't stand this. . . ."

His hand, creeping over her face, stopped her.

Everything was gone, broken. This the miserable end of their romance. Lying in the dark, derelicts, two creatures defeated by the immutable turns of fate. This the horrible finale to their years together. . . . His arms suddenly encircled her.

"Good-bye . . . dearest. If it will help . . . you. . . . Good-bye."

"No!"

He held her wildly to him. A rush of memory was upon him. Little gestures of her, little long forgotten sentences, the tone of her voice in the days of the past, the laugh of her, the incidents of their home, intimate trifles—these crowded into his heart, ached in his thought. He embraced her more desperately, feeling dimly that he was bringing back to him things that had almost escaped him. A thousand memories of her were in his arms. He kissed her and felt upon his lips the rekindled warmth of the summer night at the lagoon, of nights that had followed and all things that had been.

"Helen," he murmured, "I can't. I was wrong."

He flung himself from her and lay alone on the bed sobbing, his shoulders dancing in the darkness.

## II

It was late morning when he awoke. A sense of adventure at once fell upon him. He turned his eyes and beheld Helen, fully dressed, sitting beside the window staring out upon the bright street.

He noticed that her face was white and that a melancholy was in her eyes. Hearing him awake, she looked at him, a faint smile curving her lips. At the sight of her an enervation overpowered him. The memories of the night raced

through his thought. She loved him—wildly, foolishly. He returned her smile with an effort at genial well being.

She shook her head.

"You look foolish, smiling like that," she said wearily.

He beckoned her to the bed. He took her hand and raising it to his lips, kissed it.

"Don't, George. I'm afraid. I couldn't sleep. I've been sitting there—thinking. After all . . . perhaps you're right. It isn't fair to you."

She turned her eyes full and clouded with tears upon him. He sat up gaily, and with a hilarious note in his voice, cried,

"Make way. The philosopher rises for his bath."

"I'm afraid, George."

Bennett contemplated her with an amusement in his eyes.

"Silly," he cried. "After all our remarkable discussion . . . last night."

"I know, but . . . you'll feel that way again when you're tired and overworked as you were and . . . and . . . Oh, George, it can never be the same."

"Bah," exclaimed the mysteriously elate philosopher. "I've been thinking, too—massive, simple thoughts. Come, I've an announcement to make."

He was out of bed and fumbling in the closet for a dressing gown.

"This," he cried, reappearing, "is our wedding day, coming, as it should in all philosophically regulated homes, close upon the honeymoon."

He laughed at the sally. Helen contemplated him intently.

"Don't look as if you were frightened out of your wits, lady."

And sinking with melodramatic mockery to his knee he extended his arm, one hand over his pyjama coat pocket, and cried:

"Will you be mine, fair one? I cannot live without you!"

"George, don't be silly. It isn't nice."

He arose and with a sudden serious humility placed his hands on her shoulders and added:

"I mean it."

## III

It was evening when they returned. They entered the house walking slowly. A number of sallies were on Bennett's lips. But the occasion seemed to have acquired suddenly a preposterous solemnity. A few minutes later they were seated as they had been the night before when he had started to . . .

Bennett sighed. Helen looked up, her face flushed, her eyes sparkling.

"Wouldn't you like to take your walk, George? Now that we're stupidly married you needn't forego all the joys of unconventionality."

"Oh, no, I'd rather stay here. With you," he added somewhat hurriedly.

"Don't be silly, George. Go for your walk."

He arose with alacrity. He wanted to be alone, to think. He had been thinking most of the day, but somehow the process had been unsatisfactory. He stooped over and kissed his wife.

"I'll be back soon," he said.

She laughed.

"You're funny," she cried. "Why, there'll be no living with you now that you're a respectably married man."

He thought as he passed out of the house that there was a vaguely unnatural note in her laugh. He walked on down the familiar stretch of street toward the park.

"A bit of a gloat," he murmured to himself.

He entered the park, searching out the bench he had occupied the night before. For long moments he sat staring vacantly at the sweep of darkness overhead. Bits of the ceremony recurred to him, the fat, red-faced judge, the vastly amused clerk. He frowned. The idiots! Why do people laugh at weddings? His eyes returned to the gravelled path. A man and woman were walking arm in arm down the stretch toward the lagoon. He stared after them in a curious melancholy daze. As they vanished he jumped to his feet, an exclamation on his lips—

"Heavens—it's time I was returning home!"

# PYRAMUS AND THISBE, TRISTAN AND ISOLDE, HERO AND LEANDER, *ET AL.*

By Betting Calvert

HE had asked to be alone with her for a little. . . .

Everyone knew now that he loved her—something they had never known as long as she was alive.

There she lay stretched out on a white velvet couch, with her little hands folded, and flowers in her hair. His glance went quickly along to her feet . . . those little tripping feet, now so sedately still in their white satin slippers.

He turned away . . . he knew that *that* was not his Wonderful Girl. She was in some bright and happy place among the stars. It was her room . . . the sense of her presence it gave him, that he wanted.

He went slowly around the room touching things . . . a little lacquered jewel box, a string of Japanese beads, a ball of bright yellow wool . . . the silver frame that had once held his photograph, but was empty now—and then a little crystal perfume flask. . . .

Everything in the room was charming but this flask spoke to him. . . .

He could see her impudently looking at him over her shoulder as she tipped it up to the place he loved best. . . .

He remembered that last night . . . why had they quarrelled—why had he left her like that? It seemed silly now . . . a little petty misunderstanding. His mind left it quickly and flew to the wonderful moments. . . .

Suddenly weakened, he sat down in a chair by the window, and buried his face in his hands. . . .

Presently there was a rustling sound in the room, like the folding of wings. . . .

*She* stirred and climbed down off the white velvet bier. He could hear her coming—her little white feet tripped over the rug—she had forgotten how to walk on earth. . . .

She came and knelt down beside him.

He knew she couldn't be there . . she was dead—they were going to bury her to-morrow morning. . . She couldn't be there, but he heard her breathing and felt her body against his knee.

He took his hands down . . . Oh, so slowly—and opened his eyes.

There she was. She seemed insufferably radiant and beautiful, like stars laughing in Heaven, her hair was pale gold, and she smelt of frankincense and myrrh. . . .

But her voice was very gentle and human.

"If I had known you loved me like this, I wouldn't have died," she said.

A WOMAN'S life lasts from the day that she falls in love to the day that some one falls in love with her daughter.

# THE INSPIRATION OF CLEON FITCHARD

By Charles Divine

I

CLEON looked out of his attic window at the treetops in the park. He pursed his lips reflectively and stabbed his pencil at the manuscript in front of him. Then he turned to the bottle of beer at his elbow, drank of it, and thumbed his rhyming dictionary. And with this preparation he bent over his paper again and completed that particular stanza.

He had read somewhere that Lord Byron was wont to write his poems with a rhyming dictionary in one hand and a glass of gin in the other—and had been moderately successful. Cleon got him a second-hand rhyming dictionary at a dingy bookshop, but he couldn't afford the gin. So he compromised on beer. The results this morning appeared to gratify him. He jumped up from his chair, recited the last stanza of his love poem, and left the concluding line ringing on the air of the garret room: "And her lips are moulded of dew and fire—"

"What's that you was sayin'?"

Abruptly he turned toward the questioner. He had forgotten that Mrs. Kelly was there, with her dust-rag and apron and conversational eagerness.

"Nothing, Mrs. Kelly," he flung at her. "Nothing at all!"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Fritchard, I thought you was addressin' me." She flicked her dust-rag, hurt.

Cleon had made arrangements that no one was to be permitted to enter his "studio" except Mrs. Kelly, the "cleaning woman," and Mrs. Van Dossiter. He had packed off all the unconventional young things and other blondes who used to come and lie on his sofa pillows and smoke his cigarettes and listen to his poetry.

All this because Mrs. Van Dossiter had entered his life. Mrs. Van Dossiter was rich. She had come into many big business interests, which others managed for her. She was on the verge of forty and a divorce.

Moreover, Mrs. Van Dossiter was thrilled. She found Cleon unusual. She had never been loved by a poet before. She had always lived "uptown."

Thus it was that Cleon's day was divided into two distinct parts. Part I., the morning and early afternoon, when he wrote his poems undisturbed, except for Mrs. Kelly's garrulous sweeping and dusting. Part II., beginning at 4 p.m., when Mrs. Van Dossiter came in her limousine and stayed to a candle-lit tea or else dragged him off in her Packard twin six to Long Vue or some other tea-house up the Hudson.

II

THE line describing his new love as possessing "lips moulded of dew and fire" was written of Mrs. Van Dossiter. The whole poem was so full of a great surge of passion that Cleon paced up and down the room, as full of its beauty as the poem was of its heat.

"You oughta put it on ice, sir!"

"What's that?" he demanded, wheeling on Mrs. Kelly.

"That bottle of beer. It don't look appetizin'."

"Don't interrupt me!" he command-

ed, and Mrs. Kelly, after a few more wrathful flourishes of her dust-rag, gathered her skirts and appliances about her and departed.

Promptly at four Mrs. Van Dossiter's limousine drew up in front of the faded house, and Mrs. Van Dossiter got out. One couldn't say that she alighted, for that verb should be reserved for the action of a younger and more sprightly woman.

Five minutes later Mrs. Van Dossiter was ensconced among the sofa pillows where the casual blondes used to sit. She was happy. It meant a great deal to her, the love of Cleon Fitchard. And Mrs. Van Dossiter meant even more than love to Cleon. She would have to, at her age and with her figure. (Besides, Cleon himself had passed the pink flush of youth. He had passed it without ever displaying any of the attributes of an Apollo. And he suspected that the casual blondes liked his cigarettes more than they liked his poetry.)

Mrs. Van Dossiter listened to Cleon's newest poem. She liked it. When he told her that she was his inspiration, she was pleased to acknowledge it. She went further, and outlined to him the great desire of her heart: to be his constant inspiration, to make him reach, through her love and companionship, epic heights of dizzy prominence.

"I'll send this to *Pegasus*," he said, naming a magazine that was noted for publishing the best verse of the day and the most expensive.

"The *Pegasus*!" she cried. "Oh, have you ever had poems in there?"

He saw that the thought of his work in *Pegasus* brought her a tingle of excitement. He would have liked to let the tingling go on gathering momentum.

He paused a moment, and then, evidently having decided to tell the truth, replied:

"No. I have tried, but they have rejected my poems."

She let out a petulant protest.

"Oh! . . . But they won't dare reject this one. Send it to them, by all means. Remember who inspired it!" She sought a coquettish pose among the cushions and pressed his hand.

## III

CLEON sent the poem to *Pegasus*. It was accepted!

The event called for a celebration. Cleon sped the news to Mrs. Van Dossiter by telephone, and they met. He told her—and believed it—that she was a successful inspiration. She exulted over it. They stayed on at the Hudson River inn for dinner, and discussed his future—which was her future, too. . . .

There were other poems, other acceptances by *Pegasus* and other commemorating dinners. The cheques from *Pegasus* were ample and sweet, and a personal letter from Mr. Darlington Dean, the editor, held out the promise of an unending market for the poetical works of Cleon Fitchard. He felt that fame was clutching at his coat-tails. But he began to feel that there was another clutching hand, growing more and more insistent, and a little irksome—the hand of Mrs. Van Dossiter.

The cheques he was receiving from the magazine, together with newspaper money, made Cleon more independent than he had ever been before. Things came to such a pass that he even paid his rent. Then revolt stirred.

He began to feel that he no longer needed Mrs. Van Dossiter's inspiration. He began to feel he had flown beyond her. He began to feel that he no longer needed her limousine in which to take the air after a hard day's work with the pen. He could now afford a ride up Fifth Avenue on top of a 'bus. He began to feel he no longer needed Mrs. Van Dossiter's dinners. He could now afford to buy his own meals at a cheap little restaurant near Washington Square, and sometimes three times a day! He began to feel as if he would like to be freed of Mrs. Van Dossiter's cloying amours. He could now afford to have the penniless blondes smoking his cigarettes on the sofa pillows.

This was what success did to Cleon. Mrs. Van Dossiter sensed it. She told him of it. She told him of it violently, with her robust bosom heaving and her heavy earrings dancing a vexed accompaniment: all that he meant to her, all that she meant to him. His inspiration! Hadn't he admitted it himself? Hadn't he acclaimed it hundreds of times! Mrs. Van Dossiter wasn't used to being thrown aside like that. She had never *been* thrown aside. The divorce she was getting was *her* divorce, not *his*. It meant freedom for her, and that nothing would then stand between her and Cleon; and—this she didn't tell him—she would have a real live poet for a life partner.

In rebuttal Cleon tried to make much of the value of frankness. At great length he told her that it was good for both of them to have this heart-to-heart talk, but that he had reached a point where his soul demanded a period of solitude. (Cleon had been withholding talk of his soul for just such an emergency.) He said that he thought it would be salutary for them not to see each other for a time. Love was such a difficult thing to appraise, and to exercise one's self greatly over its resurgent manifestations was to lose perspective entirely. Thus Cleon attempted to bewilder her. One must simply wait and watch, he said. . . .

Mrs. Van Dossiter left the interview in a huff. She hoped his old poetry would go to pieces!

Strangely enough, it did. That very day Cleon wrote a poem on freedom, the emancipation of the heart, the striking off of spiritual shackles; and the poem was rejected by *Pegasus*—his first rejection in weeks.

There was another rejection a few days later. Others followed in sickening succession.

Mrs. Van Dossiter came to call coolly and calmly, and inquired how his work was going. Oh, so-so! But she knew better. She got him to admit that his poems no longer found favour with the editor who had once written him personal letters of praise. She behaved with marvellous poise, which excited his admiration, and before she left she remarked, with great self-possession:

"Perhaps, my dear Cleon, you will realize in time that there was more to my inspiration than you suspected. But that is for you to find out. Bye-bye, Cleon! I'm off to tea at Tarrytown."

The door banged. There were footsteps on the stairs. Outside the window the Packard twin six was purring. It slipped tranquilly through the park, carrying Mrs. Van Dossiter to those delightful haunts upon which Cleon had turned his back. And he was as hungry as the most ravenous tea-hound in the world! . . .

Cleon, who had always been fond of experiments, found this one going against him. His poetry, as Mrs. Van Dossiter had spitefully hoped, was indeed going to pieces. It worried him and made him doubt himself again. Repeated doses of the rhyming dictionary and the beer failed to rally him. Rejection slips from *Pegasus* came in every mail.

The last straw that broke the rebellious spirit of Cleon was the rejection of "Little Moon Without a Lover," a poem on which he had built great hopes.

After that he packed off the vagabond blondes again and called Mrs. Van Dossiter back. She came triumphant, with a fine show of courage and forgiveness.

They swore eternal love, hand in hand, and lip to lip.

"You were such an obstinate darling!" she cooed happily.

"Yes," sighed Cleon, resigned, "but now I have seen the light."

## IV

THE next manuscript which Cleon sent to *Pegasus* reached the critical eyes of the editor, Darlington Dean, as he was in conference with his associate, Mr. Ross. At the same time the door opened before the onrush of a person of

importance, who was admitted to the office with great ceremony.

The editor leaped to his feet.

"Ah, Mrs. Van Dossiter! So glad to see you. May I introduce Mr. Ross to you?"

The associate editor was impressed.

"It is a pleasure to know the owner of *Pegasus*," he said. "Your visits to this office are so few that I had despaired of ever meeting you."

Mrs. Van Dossiter smiled.

"I believe in letting those in charge of my various interests run them as they see fit," she replied. "I haven't interfered much, have I, Mr. Dean?"

"Very little. Refreshingly so! Except for your recent disapproval of the poems of Cleon Fitchard."

"That's what I came to see you about, Mr. Dean. I regret that I ordered you not to print any more of his poems. I now rescind that order. I shall not let my personal likes and dislikes hamper your work. On the contrary, I wish you would print all of Mr. Fitchard's work submitted from now on. I can see its beauty, don't you know. I think he has—er—ah—a great future!"

## SURRENDER

### By Helen Sevrez

BELOVÈD, when you come with tender eyes
And hold me, pale and trembling, to your breast,
Must I respond with mockery and lies,
Since wisdom deems it best!

Must our poor lives lie ever far apart?
Must we be ever mute? Must we disown
That rapture of communion, heart to heart,
We two have always known?

Love came unbidden and unsought, to crown
The anguish of a cold and loveless past.
O my beloved! Hurl Fate's barriers down,
And make me yours . . . at last!

MANY a woman would laugh at the funeral of her husband if it were not for the pallbearers and her black veil.

# THE HUSBAND INSPIRER

By Thyra Samter Winslow

## I

CORINNA WOODMAN was born and lived for a time in Desmont, Oklahoma. Desmont is one of a hundred dust-covered, grey towns which dot the South-West at frequent intervals. They are all alike. There is a business backbone through the centre of them with a Central or a Grand Hotel on it, one office building which boasts five stories, one "department store" whose buyer goes to New York or Chicago twice a year, and a scattering of one and two-storied shops. Out from the backbone run the residential streets, even layers of square, prosperous two-storied houses with fenced yards containing green swings, atrocious flat things called bungalows and the humbler cottages of the poor.

Corinna lived in one of the humbler cottages of Desmont. But, because she had bright gold hair, too-blue eyes, dimples, a knowledge of the value of compliments and an ability to giggle, she was accepted as a member of the so-called Younger Set of Desmont, composed of the usual sons and daughters of the town's leading merchants and professional men. It was led, in this instance, by Alma Glover, daughter of President Glover of the First National Bank. Alma was blonde, too, but it was a dull blondeness, and, alas, her eyelashes were white. She was inclined to fatness and, if Alma had not been so prominent in the community, she might have been referred to as dumpy. Corinna was jealous of Alma, but as the daughter of a bookkeeper at the Acme Feed and Supply Store should have been grateful for a mere glance from the eyes of Alma, neither Corinna nor Alma was aware of the jealousy.

Corinna was graduated from High School with the others of "the crowd," and, though her humble position called for and received no honours, she got her diploma with the rest, looking much better in the dress which she and Mrs. Woodman made at home with the help of Miss Norrison (a dollar fifty a day) than did Alma in the "creation" which the New York store ordered for her direct from Chicago.

After graduation Corinna settled down to enjoy the "society" offered at Desmont, the dances at the cheap little Country Club, the theatre parties to the third-rate road shows which occasionally presented themselves, the dinners and teas. Corinna didn't do anything useful, of course. Girls lost caste if they worked in Desmont, though they could teach school and still be socially acceptable. But Corinna had neither the brains nor the desire for teaching. She liked being idle.

Two years of small-town "society," during which Corinna had her share of the town's masculine attentions, and then Lester White came to Desmont. Lester came with the new local branch of an Eastern oil corporation. Oil had been discovered near Desmont some time before. Lester was a Harvard graduate. He had glossy black hair and was six feet tall. He was a civil engineer. He spoke with a Boston accent. Any of these attributes, separately, would have made an impression in Desmont, where every new man was an immediate object of interest. All of them made him irresistible.

Graham Fredericks, whose father

was in the oil business, brought Lester to a Country Club dance. Someone else would have brought him if Graham hadn't. Two days after Lester arrived in town every girl in "the crowd" was self-consciously aware of him, putting on her smartest clothes when she went downtown, walking by the Grand Hotel with head up, eyes down, so that, if the New Man saw he'd see how charming and demure and modest she was and beg for an introduction. In a little town, where the cream of the home-town boys migrates to the city as soon as it grows up and where a new man is nearly unknown, the arrival of a Lester White is almost a miracle. Probably every girl in town gave a prayer of thanks for his presence, followed by a prayer a bit more personal.

Lester White was a small-town boy himself, though his town happened to be East instead of South-West. His accent had been carefully cultivated. His salary was small and this was his first opportunity, after two years of trying to get a foothold. The girls in Desmont didn't know about these things. They wouldn't have cared if they had.

Lester met all the girls the same evening, so the race started without a handicap. After looking them all over, he unhesitatingly chose Corinna. You wouldn't have blamed him. Her blonde hair was copied after an arrangement she had seen on an actress in a magazine picture. She wore a fluffy home-made evening frock, and her blue eyes were very attractive at night. Her mouth was the soft, very red kind that grows hard later on and she had a saucy profile. Lester hadn't expected to find girls like that in Desmont.

The other girls weren't surprised at Lester's choice. Corinna usually attracted the visiting young men, the commercial travellers who were presentable enough to bring to the Country Club, the guests of the town boys. Alma would have liked Lester, but he didn't notice her, and Alma was "going with" Paul Jackson, then, and Paul, though a bit heavy and dull, wasn't to be sneered at.

Lester started rushing Corinna, that is, as much as anyone can rush a girl in Desmont. He became a member of the Country Club and took Corinna to all of the affairs and to the theatre and to dances. He called on Sunday and a couple of times during the week. He sent East for candy.

If Lester was surprised at the humbleness of the Woodman home—old man Woodman in his shirt-sleeves, smoking a pipe and reading the paper, Ma Woodman, in an ill-fitting wrapper, usually busy at mending or cooking, and Roy Woodman, uncouth, ill-mannered—he said nothing about it. Corinna was a jolly girl. She could play the piano and sing. She danced well. She didn't expect too much from a fellow and was mighty grateful when you gave her small presents. There were other members of the Desmont Younger Set who came from humble homes, so no one wondered about Corinna. She had always been popular.

So, pretty soon, "the crowd" got to speaking about Corinna and Lester, as if their going together were a settled thing. For a year they were together a great deal. They were never engaged. It was just on the distant side of that. In small towns, "going together" nearly always leads gradually into an engagement, into showers for the bride-to-be, a trousseau, a stag dinner for the bridegroom and then the wedding, with six of the bride's best girl friends, all dressed alike, walking up the aisle of the bride's church. Then the couple settles down in a shiny new house, sized according to circumstances, and joins the Young Married Set and enters on a new stratum of existence.

Of course Corinna looked forward to all of this. She was quite proud of the way she had managed things for herself—she had always sneered a bit at the home-town boys and she hated poverty. She was really fond of Lester White, as fond as she could be of anyone. He answered all of her dreams of romance, he thrilled her, he fed her vanity.

Lester got a rise his second year in Desmont. He was made assistant man-

ager of the local branch, with hints that there might be other rises in the future and that he ought to, well, settle down.

With the idea of being a substantial man of business, Lester started seeing things with a different vision. Corinna sank into her place as a pretty but rather bold little thing of no particular family. And, as Corinna sank, Alma Glover rose. For the Glovers lived in Desmont's most impressive home, a square red brick house with big porches all around it. Alma and the two younger Glover girls, now entering Desmont's social whirl, had things nearly their own way. Alma's waist may not have been as trim nor her mouth as red nor her repartée as saucy as Corinna's, but even in Desmont there are more important things.

Lester started calling at the Glover home instead of the Woodman cottage. Mrs. Glover, with three marriageable daughters on her hands, and all a-flutter over the responsibility, was glad to find that Lester was beginning to appreciate Alma's charms, for Paul had gone to St. Louis and Alma had no serious admirers. Mrs. Glover was a large woman with a playful manner and, at the Country Club, where she often chaperoned the dances, she had intimated that Lester's attentions to her daughter would not be unwelcome.

## II

Corinna couldn't quite understand, at first, as Lester's affections waned. She was rather a simple girl. When Lester neglected to call and even to take her to dances, and the candy from New York—Page and Shaw and Maillard's and other brands hitherto unknown in Desmont — went to Alma, Corinna began to see, only too well, how things were. At first she went to rather great lengths to hold Lester. She was skillful with men, so she did get him back for a little while. But, as Lester's future didn't demand Corinna's in it at all, he finally stopped calling.

Corinna tried to make the best of it in rather pitiful attempts at gaiety, picking out less desirable young men of "the crowd" on whom to lavish her smiles and giggles. But even small-town boys are peculiar and those who a year ago would have been delighted at Corinna's favour now waved it coolly aside. Lester had thrown her down. They didn't want left-overs.

Alma and Lester announced their engagement in August, a very warm August even for Oklahoma. Then the Glovers went to a Wisconsin summer resort and Lester went North to spend his vacation with them. Mrs. Woodman wasn't very well and summer resorts were out of the question for the Woodman family, anyhow, so Corinna spent the time cooking, which she detested.

In September the Glovers returned. Alma had bought her trousseau in Chicago and already was flaunting a brilliant plaid coat, forerunner of splendours still to come. The wedding was in October. Of course Corinna was invited. She was even asked to "assist" at some of the many receptions and parties given for Alma. She wasn't asked to be one of the wedding party. Alma chose more the socially fit for that pleasant task. She spoke to Corinna as friendly as ever, but it was understood that Lester had regarded her as a pastime, that he'd cared for Alma all along and hadn't dared approach her.

The wedding was a very pretty one. Alma went to the altar on the arm of her father, who had stopped drinking that day until after the ceremony as a special concession—a slight but steady intoxication did not interfere with banking success in Desmont—and was followed by her sister Lucile as maid of honour and her sister Mary and five others of Desmont's fairest daughters, all in pale pink, as bridesmaids. The bridegroom had the usual ushers and a friend from the East, "another Harvard graduate," as best man. Following the wedding, there was a reception at the Glover home, and the Desmont *Daily News* gave a whole column to the affair, beginning: "The most important event in this season's social life

took place yesterday when Miss Alma Elizabeth Glover, the eldest daughter . . ." and ended with: "After an Eastern honeymoon trip, the happy young couple will be at home in a beautiful new bungalow on Maple Place, the gift of the bride's father."

After the wedding, Corinna was quite definitely left out of things. It came about casually. It was so easy to leave her out, no family, no hold on anyone, only admitted into the crowd through chance in the beginning.

## III

CORINNA thought her heart was broken. She was even more certain about the injury to her feelings. If she hadn't had quite so much pride she probably would have taken up with the cheaper crowd, those who attended the weekly dances at Berman's Hall. But, having gone with "real society," as it is found in Desmont, she wouldn't accept a substitute. She moped for a while and even forgot to take care of her fingernails. She was forgotten in Desmont as if she had become invisible. She might have continued that way, always.

Then, suddenly, without telling anyone, Corinna got married. She was quite surprised about it herself. She married Eddie Stayler, who clerked in the Acme Feed and Supply Store.

Eddie was a nondescript youth who had come from an even smaller town than Desmont at the death of his parents. He was all alone. He had indefinite brown hair, already starting to recede from his forehead at twenty-four, kind, light-brown eyes and a diffident manner. Corinna had nodded to him when she went into the Acme, as she did occasionally, to get money from her father. He was not only not in "the crowd," he was not in any crowd. He lived in a rented room and ate around at indifferent boarding-places. Evenings, he read or attended cheap shows or played pool with stray acquaintances. Corinna had always regarded him as impersonally as she did the bags of grain that stood, open, around the store. But one day she talked to him. It was right after Alma's marriage and talking to anyone helped Corinna to forget herself. She found Eddie was a nice, gentle boy who didn't know life had played tricks on her, but regarded her as a very beautiful person, quite above his place in the world.

So, quite suddenly, Corinna decided to marry him. She knew, definitely, that she could never marry any of Desmont's more desirable young men. She hated the cheap crowd and the occasional commercial travellers. There was no money to spend on summer resorts, where more prosperous girls conduct their regulation man-hunt. Any really desirable new man who came to Desmont, now might call on her or take her places, but he'd soon be made to understand by others of "the crowd" that Corinna was outside the line as a matrimonial possibility. It never occurred to her that she might make a career for herself, though there was nothing she could have done, in all likelihood, if she had thought of it. Corinna hated work of any kind.

So Corinna married Eddie Stayler. She hardly bothered to tell Eddie about it. She had gone with boys since she was sixteen and knew so many things about managing them that it was quite like kidnapping to flatter the gentle Eddie into calling, then into taking her to the places of amusement that he could afford and that were open to them—they couldn't go to the Country Club—and she wouldn't consider Berman's, and finally into a proposal. Eddie liked her. It couldn't have been called anything more definite. But he was quite overcome by her blonde hair and flashing blue eyes and masterful manner. Before he knew it he was being married by a strange minister in the Woodman parlour with only the Woodman family in attendance.

There was no wedding reception, no honeymoon. The Desmont *Daily News* gave three lines to the marriage and the young couple settled down in Corinna's room of the Woodman cottage, and Mrs. Woodman and Corinna, who took

turns at the cooking, added an extra plate at meal-times.

For six months Corinna lived in a kind of lethargy. She moped at home. At least, though, she was married! She felt that that proved something definite —she hadn't needed Lester White, after all. She knew Alma and Lester were back in Desmont. She read of the housewarming party they gave, of the reception at the Glovers' for them, of other affairs. She saw Lester on the street and crossed to the other side so as to avoid speaking to him or cutting him. No one paid any attention to her. If she had lacked the "something" that caused her to lead her husband onward to Success, Corinna's future and Eddie's future would have trailed off, greying, into a continuation of the sort of life her parents lived, as, indeed, she was living now, with never an example or lesson for other wives.

## IV

One day Corinna stopped in at the Paris Millinery Shop to look at straw sailors. It was June and her only hat was shabby. Just as she was deciding on one at four dollars Alma came in, accompanied by two other girls of the Younger Married Set.

They all nodded to Corinna indifferently, and giggled over little intimate jokes, as they started trying on hats.

Corinna saw Alma considering two attractive hats, one, a black picture hat with a big plume—they were wearing plumes then—the other a bonnet with tiny pink rosebuds.

Corinna knew they would both look better on her. Hardly knowing that she did it, she reached out for them. One was twenty, the other seventeen dollars. She tried them both on. Alma was trying to decide on one of them and asked, giggling, for the other girls to give their opinions.

Corinna smiled more pertly than she had smiled for eight months, since Alma's wedding, and said:

"Please don't set your heart on these, Alma. I've just decided to take both," and nodded to the saleswoman.

The clerk was new in Desmont. She didn't know her patrons' standing. Everyone in Desmont had charge accounts. She took Corinna's name and address and promised to send both hats.

"I hope you aren't hurt, my being such a pig," said Corinna and smiled at Alma. "You see, we're going away for a week-end visit and I just had to have them. You know how husbands are about wanting to show off new wives."

Alma smiled back, rather dazed. She had heard that Corinna had married a poor clerk, whom nobody knew. Well, maybe he had money. She had nothing against Corinna. Hadn't she married the man Corinna wanted? Corinna wasn't living as if she'd married money. Well, if Corinna wanted to buy those hats . . . they were beauties and she'd wanted both of them, but, maybe it was just as well. They were awfully expensive and Lester probably wouldn't have liked her getting one.

Out in the street again, Corinna took little breaths of surprise. It was the most astonishing thing that had ever happened to her—except losing Lester. She had had to do it! Let Alma see her buy a four-dollar sailor and tell Lester about it and smile over it together? Never! How would the hats get paid for? Thirty-seven dollars! She'd have to keep them. All Desmont, the part that counted, would find out and laugh, if she sent them back. Well, she was married to Eddie and he'd have to pay for them. Six months—and she was still living with her people and Eddie was getting far less than the price of these hats for a whole week's work. Eddie'd simply have to do something about it.

She told Eddie about the hats that night. Not the exact circumstances, of course, but that she just had to have something nice, things to wear. And he—he'd have to pay for them. She was entitled to pretty things. She was pretty and young. Of course he couldn't pay for them if he stayed at the Acme. He'd have to find something else then.

She didn't know what else. She'd be glad if he did start hunting. Of course jobs were hard to get. But he was twenty-five now and it was time he was starting to do things. She wanted some sort of a life. If he thought she'd be satisfied with things going on this way, he was mistaken.

She cried herself to sleep. Eddie didn't sleep at all, so he looked rather pale the next day.

Two days later Corinna bought a new summer frock at the New York Store. She bought Eddie a tie and then made him take her to the Musical Festival at Electric Park, which they had decided not to attend because the tickets were two dollars apiece.

"I've got to go," said Corinna. "You married me and I've simply got to have things. I can't get along any longer this way—with nothing. I don't know how you'll get the money. I don't know anything about business. Other men get it. There's no reason why *you* can't."

Corinna was quite the prettiest girl at the Park. She wore the bonnet and the new frock and they were both very becoming. She wished Eddie were better looking, more style, but that couldn't he helped, of course. He had such country manners. She'd have to teach him better before she introduced him to people. She nodded, rather distantly, to all of her old friends.

That night a little wrinkle appeared between Eddie's eyes. It gave him an appearance of thoughtfulness and was quite becoming, so perhaps it was just as well that it never went away.

## V

For two weeks Eddie kept his position at the feed store. At noon he hunted for something else to do. He didn't find anything. Then one day the proprietor of the Acme heard that Eddie was trying to get another job, so assisted him by taking the old job away. Jobless, Eddie went home to his wife and handed her his week's salary.

Perhaps Corinna knew that if she really wanted to help her husband succeed she should not give way to sentiment or sympathy. She didn't. She had a mild case of hysteria and later showed Eddie some new shoes she had bought because everyone in town had white shoes but she.

Next day Eddie got a position in a real estate office. It was the sort of position that is always open to anyone in a small town. If you sold lots in a new "addition" you got a commission. If you didn't, you didn't. As you were supposed to be on the street, selling, you didn't take up much office space. Eddie didn't understand the system very well, but it certainly sounded fine. Why, selling one lot would pay for all of Corinna's debts and allow him to pay his share of the expenses of the Woodman home for several weeks.

Eddie didn't know any people in Desmont who wanted to buy real estate, but he remembered a man on a farm near Brightwood, the town he'd come from, who was always wanting to "move to town." The next day Eddie went out to the farm and sold two lots, of a hundred feet each, in Lakeview Addition, before he found out that selling real estate was difficult.

When Eddie told Corinna she kissed him on both cheeks. When he got his cheque they'd pay half of the debts—they were really awfully small and selling two lots meant so much money—and they'd run up to Kansas City and get some new clothes. Eddie didn't know about that. He tried to reason. But Corinna had never been to Kansas City and that was where Desmont "society folk" who couldn't afford a trip to Chicago always went.

They stayed a week in Kansas City. Corinna got an early fall suit and two more hats and an evening dress and some little things she'd always wanted. She bought a dress for her mother and a suit, hat and cane for Eddie. They came back with a dollar and forty cents left of the commission money and the local debts unpaid.

Eddie didn't sell many more lots for a week or two. Corinna was quite put

out about it and said so. Eddie tried to sell to everyone in Desmont, but possibly fifty of Desmont's unemployed youths had already tried to sell those lots there. It wasn't that the property was undesirable, for it was high and attractive and not expensive. But few people in Desmont were planning to move and those who were planning and had money preferred the Hawthorne Addition, for it was more stylish, or had their eyes on lots in the built-up part of town. Edgewater Addition was owned by a New York company. They had spent no money in advertising or beautifying their property. They had bought it for its supposed oil possibilities and when it failed to show any signs of oil it became "Edgewater Addition, desirable residential property," instead.

Three weeks passed and Eddie sold no more real estate. Corinna, who had seen signs of prosperity, became crosser and more pouty all the time. She intimated to Eddie, who didn't know differently, that she had had a lot of chances and had thrown herself away on him. She pointed out to him her prosperous friends, whom, before her marriage she had associated with, and showed him that, because she was so poor and had married an unknown man, she couldn't go with her friends at all.

Eddie had a good brain. It just hadn't worked before. Under Corinna's petty tyrannies, the machinery started, slowly, to revolve. If one farmer wanted land, why didn't another? Only a few lots had been sold in Edgewater Addition, and there wasn't a house or a bungalow there, just empty lots and "For Sale" signs. If there was only a bungalow there, all finished, just for show! Corinna was starting to fuss about the Woodman home, saying she wouldn't stay here another month. If the company would build a bungalow for him and let him pay for it gradually . . .

He approached the local manager, who was impressed with Eddie's first sale. Eddie didn't know how he did it but he persuaded Phipps to have a five-room bungalow built, which Eddie was to occupy and to pay for out of his commissions, when he made them. A second and perhaps a third bungalow were to be built for future buyers.

As soon as the ground for the bungalow was broken, Corinna stopped old friends to tell them about it. Yes, indeed, her husband was assistant manager of the Edgewater Improvement Company and they were hoping the bungalow would soon be ready. Land there was, well, rather expensive, but there were so many natural advantages. Yes, the bungalow would be rather a good one. Edward, Mr. Stayler, you know, had people in the East who were, well, rather indirectly back of the company. Oh, yes, Mr. Stayler came of a well-known family, yes, he really had a great future.

Eddie started, systematically, to sell real estate in the country. His very simplicity, his earnestness, attracted the farmers. Many of them were about ready to "move to town" and Desmont was important in the vicinity, or they had young people who insisted they couldn't stay on the farm. Eddie sold a good many lots at Edgewater.

Corinna was pleased with him. If she was severe with him about the way he pronounced words or sat down or tied his tie, it was for his own good, of course. Wasn't she helping him?

Lester and Alma had an automobile, a small car which Mr. Glover had given them a few months before. It quite took Eddie's breath away, when he got home after a week's trip and had failed to sell any lots at all, to find that he was nearly the possessor of a five-passenger car, an expensive one at that time, and that it only needed his signature to complete the transaction. He tried to argue with Corinna—they owed a number of small debts around town, Corinna's wardrobe had increased rather alarmingly—but Corinna had her heart set on it and he hated scenes. After all, the events of the last few months had quite upset him. If he could sell some lots he could sell more. If having a car would keep Corinna

from fussing at him—well . . . there were a few lines around his mouth, now, not very deep ones, as yet.

## VI

When the bungalow was finished and furnished in shiny red mahogany and Corinna owned the best-looking automobile in Desmont—she was the first woman to drive and was quite proud when she sprained her wrist cranking; it was before the day of self-starters—she commenced her social campaign. She knew Desmont too well to take the simple method of having a party and inviting old friends. She was still left out of things. Eddie was poorly groomed, unknown. They didn't have any money and they did have debts. Giving a party would just cause smiles and wouldn't get her anywhere.

So Corinna began being nice to girls she had hardly noticed before—Corinna had never been a great one to go with girls. Substantial girls who had prominent fathers found that Corinna would meet them downtown and insist on taking them for a drive and then to the little new bungalow for "tea." So, before long, she was asked, carelessly, to come to the sewing club, of which she had once been a member, a large, not exclusive organization. A good first step, anyhow.

When Corinna's turn came to entertain the club she quite bowled Desmont over. The maid who served—she had insisted on a maid when she moved into the bungalow, she hated to wash dishes or dust—wore a black dress, white cap and apron, the first cap and apron ever seen in Desmont off the stage. It caused a lot of talk. It was two weeks before Alma could have caps and aprons sent in from Chicago—the New York Store hadn't thought it necessary to keep a supply of them.

The next winter Corinna and Eddie were definitely admitted as members of the Young Married Set. Several others of "the crowd" had married and Corinna had managed to fit in so well that they saw no reason why they had to do without her. Eddie had improved, too, and as he was a prosperous young business man there was no reason to exclude him.

Eddie wore his first evening clothes that year, not with a great deal of grace, but evening clothes were "full dress" in Desmont and not many of the young men were quite at home in them. Eddie's hair was receding a bit more and the wrinkles between his eyes were a little deeper, but he was still a gentle, unassuming young fellow, who seemed slightly dazed as to what life was all about.

Corinna's expenses increased after the portals of Desmont "Society" opened to her. Alma was not an ideal hostess, but she and Lester entertained a great deal and spent quite a bit of the Glover money doing it. Corinna felt that each entertainment of theirs had to be followed and outdistanced by one of her own. They were still dancing cotillions and Corinna's favours came from Chicago and were the finest and most expensive Desmont had ever seen.

Corinna felt that Lester was laughing at her. When she saw him, graceful, careless, sarcastic, usually the leader of the cotillion figures, she couldn't help comparing him to Eddie, self-conscious, ill at ease, silent: Eddie didn't seem able to learn social graces. Corinna no longer loved Lester. She knew that. But she knew, too, that she'd never be satisfied until she had established to him and to herself her superiority. And comparing her family with the Glover family and Eddie with Lester, this was no easy task. It was not a battle of culture or mental development. Those did not count in Desmont. It was mostly of effect, of "standing," of money. Corinna determined to do what she could.

To Lester and Alma, Corinna now was quite friendly. She danced with Lester and always with the satisfaction that she was lighter and slimmer and fairer than Alma. Alma came to Corinna's parties and giggled at the same jokes she did. But there must be some-

thing more than their friendly tolerance, their attitude, that, considering things, Corinna had done rather well, after all.

Eddie's real-estate sales fell off, although he scoured the country around Desmont pretty thoroughly for clients. He had sold more lots in Edgewater Addition than even the promoters had hoped for. The addition was full of ugly, new bungalows. Now few other people cared to buy. And, as he worried about making money, his household expenses increased. Corinna became more extravagant. It was her way of showing her friends how well Eddie was doing. The upkeep of the automobile, the maid, the man who took care of the car and the garden, Corinna's clothes, the numerous teas, luncheons and dinners all took money. When Eddie counted up his expenses, he could hardly believe that, a few years before, a salary of eighteen a week at the Acme had satisfied him, kept him free from debts.

Corinna was dissatisfied with the home her parents lived in. It didn't look well, she said. Roy was finishing the local high school and must go away to college. Somewhere, there had to be more money.

One night, after they returned home from a dance at the Country Club, Eddie tried to reason with Corinna, to induce her to cut down expenses. He had been away from home for six days but had not made a sale and he was worrying a little more than usual. Corinna had had a fine time at the dance. Several out-of-town men had been there and she had been unusually popular and she knew that Lester had noticed it. She had sparred with him and had been able to give him only one dance. Alma, she saw, was beginning to sit out a dance, now and then, as so many married women did in Desmont.

"Honest, dear," said Eddie, gently, as he took off his suit and hung it up carefully on a hanger, "I want you to have a good time. But things aren't looking up and people won't buy real estate and I just don't seem to—" he straggled off, unable to justify himself.

Corinna glanced at herself in the mirror, her gold hair slightly disarrayed, her shoulders very white above her pink gown, her blue eyes very round.

"Eddie," she said, as she smiled at her reflection, "you make me quite tired, really. You're always spoiling my fun with business talks. Other men don't whine to their wives. I'm tired of it. Look at all I've done for you—got you into society, given you ambition. Why, when you married me you were satisfied at the Acme, on twenty a week. It seems perfectly ridiculous. It seems to me you ought to be able to get ahead. I'm not extravagant. I want a great deal more in every way than I get and I don't complain. I'm sick and tired of this house. Everyone I know is moving. The—the Whites are going to build a big house in the Fall. This little bungalow is a sight. I want to go to Chicago or some place and get good furniture—this we have is in terrible taste—and have a real house to live in. This would be fine for the folks. Mamma likes it a great deal and could do all the work herself, if we sent Charlie in to take care of the yard. And I'm so careful about money, about clothes and things. I never have nearly enough. If you can't sell real estate, why don't you find something you *can* do? You ought to be able to make money some way. Other men do. I—I want diamonds and things other women have. I'm—I'm too good to waste this way on Desmont." She smiled at herself in the glass again.

Eddie lay awake all that night. The next morning he had a talk with Phipps, and asked for a bigger commission and a straight salary. The result was an argument, a slight misunderstanding which grew. Two weeks later, Eddie was without a job again. That week the Whites bought a lot at the corner of Heliotrope Street and Maple Place, the most fashionable streets in town, and announced that they would start building immediately. Alma

expected a baby and the cottage they had started housekeeping in would be too small.

Eddie wandered around, head down, almost afraid to speak to acquaintances. He was fond of Corinna. It never even occurred to him that he could force her to change her mode of living or that he could leave her. He felt himself a failure. Here he was, a married man, a home to maintain—and no position.

## VII

Eddie had heard of a new oil company that had recently entered the local field, a rival to the one in which Lester White was employed. He read in the *News* that morning that the Eastern managers were in town looking things over. He went to the business offices and asked to see them. It happened that they were idle for a few minutes and granted him an interview. Perhaps it was Eddie's meekness, maybe they saw some real talent underneath. They talked to him and found he was able to carry a mass of detail without losing sight of the bigger points.

He told them about selling real estate to the farm people. They suggested riding out to Edgewater Addition and looking at it. At the Addition, Eddie pointed out what he had done, the lots he had sold. He showed them his own bungalow, explained about it being the first. They stopped the car and Eddie went in and got Corinna. Corinna was just going to a luncheon and had on one of her prettiest frocks, crisp and fresh looking. She looked quite the pretty wife of a prosperous small-town business man. She chatted with them for a minute or two. The men had not decided on their local representative. Before they left town, two days later, Eddie had the job.

Eddie hardly knew what had happened to him. Corinna took all the credit to herself. Hadn't she told him to get something else? She felt that she had impressed the managers a great deal, though she had been only one pleasant detail in a satisfactory picture.

Somehow, Eddie took hold of the job better than anyone, even himself, had thought him capable of doing. He was able to grasp things quickly and he didn't forget, after he really understood a thing. He found he was able to get on well with his employees, the first he had ever had. He exacted thorough, sincere work and he did not talk unnecessarily about anything. He was gentle and silent. Those traits later earned for him a reputation for inscrutability, for character, judgment, for leadership.

As Eddie succeeded in his new position, Corinna's ambitions rose. Alma's baby came in September and two months later the White family moved into their new home. Corinna didn't want babies. She was afraid of the physical pain, afraid of losing her figure and her looks. Besides, she got along very nicely without any and never did like children. What a bother they'd be! How could she get ahead, with babies to worry about? Alma didn't go to many places of amusement for a while and Corinna noticed with great satisfaction that it was she whom Lester's eyes sought, when he entered a room. She'd show Lester lots of things.

Eddie went to New York on business. Of course Corinna went with him. It was her first trip East. They stayed at one of the larger hotels and Corinna, familiar through the fashion magazine with the more spectacular shops, bought exquisite and becoming frocks at big prices. It was the thing to do, she told Eddie. They had a position to maintain in Desmont.

While in New York, Corinna talked with a well-known firm of architects and interior decorators about building and furnishing a home for her. No one in Desmont had ever had a decorator. Some of the more ambitious ones had bought furniture, a set or an odd piece or some draperies, in Chicago or New York, but no decorator, save a pale young Desmont boy of artistic ambitions, had ever been in Desmont.

A few weeks after Eddie and

Corinna returned home, one of the architects came down to Desmont with the plans and helped pick out a suitable location for the new house. The architect and Corinna chose a hill overlooking Desmont, which had been considered too far out for residential purposes. A few weeks later the house was under way.

Eddie was aghast at the expenditure. Corinna explained, as patiently as she could, that they could not keep on living in Edgewater any longer. The neighbourhood was cheap—Eddie had sold lots to such curious people. The house was too small, they simply couldn't entertain in a five-room bungalow. Then, too, when Eddie had "owned" Edgewater, it was all right, that explained things, but now everyone knew he was no longer with the company and it made a difference. They could give the bungalow to the folks. How shabby the little Woodman cottage was getting and how badly that street had run down since she lived on it.

Six months later, the Staylers moved into their new home. It was in Elizabethan style and really in quite excellent taste. Corinna needed her own car, too, for the garage was big enough for three cars and they had only the old rattle-trap, which looked awfully cheap and wasn't even good enough for Eddie to use for business, if he'd had any pride about it.

Eddie had had a rise in salary, so Charlie made way for a trained gardener and chauffeur and inside the house there was an additional maid.

Then, just as Corinna sat down to enjoy her triumphs, the White family, Lester and Alma and Lester, Jr., moved to New York! Lester's firm had transferred him there. The Desmont *Daily News* said "to accept a position offering great advancement," and Alma more than agreed with the *News*. They sold their new house. Corinna had learned from her architect that it was "a horrible American caricature of an English cottage." They were entertained with a series of farewell parties. Corinna and Eddie gave one of them, and they left with half of Desmont at the train to wish them goodbye.

Desmont was a farce after that. With Alma away, Corinna easily obtained and kept social leadership, but what did it all amount to? Lester had counted a great deal. The indifferent look had vanished some time ago and there had been a sort of a veiled fight between them. It had made life worth while. Now Corinna felt again that utter vacancy she had felt after Lester's engagement, when she had sunk into nothingness. And now, just when Eddie was getting a good start!

Eddie was perfectly content with Desmont. He was still pretty badly in debt, but it seemed to him now that he had always been in debt. But, men of substance, in Desmont, listened to his opinions, when he gave them, which was not frequently. He knew his employers liked him. He worked hard, because of the need of money, which always grew greater, and because he was beginning to like the fight for its own sake.

And now Corinna hated Desmont. Eddie didn't understand it. It never occurred to him that she could become dissatisfied with it if there was money enough. Eddie knew that Lester and Corinna had once "gone together" but he understood that Corinna had been bored with Lester and had "thrown him over." He had seen them together and could see that they didn't care for each other. So of course Lester White had nothing to do with Corinna's change of feeling.

Now Corinna could say nothing bad enough about Desmont. It bored her. Everyone in it, individually and in groups, bored her. She laughed at the most respected citizens, thought their little set a joke, giggled at the clothes, the manners of the citizens. She called those not in her set "the peasantry," with a sneer. Her clothes became a bit more expensive, a trifle bizarre. The

chauffeur wore a uniform, the first, of course, in Desmont. Corinna didn't care for social welfare or any of the arts. So she gave parties and bought new clothes, took little trips to near-by cities and became more and more disagreeable and dissatisfied.

"I hate this town," she said one day. "You're as good a man as Lester White. He went to New York. And yet you stay on here. I'm being wasted in this place. If I hadn't married you I might have married a New York man and left here long ago. I hate it here. Why don't you get your firm to put you in their Eastern office? You certainly deserve it. I'll die if I have to stand it here another year."

Led on by her nagging, Eddie wrote to New York. He fully expected to get fired. But the local office had prospered under him and the firm needed a good new man in New York. They liked "new Western blood." So, they wired him to come on and offered a substantial increase in salary.

Corinna was in an ecstasy of joy. She kissed and hugged Eddie until he blushed. He was sincerely pleased at her happiness. She gave her father the first kiss she'd given him in four years, and told Roy that now he could finish at an Eastern university and spend his vacation with her.

Corinna didn't sell the new house. She felt it was too correct and good-looking to waste on an outsider. With one maid and a man, her parents could keep it up and have it in the family. They'd leave the new car for them, too. Surely she could do that for her parents. Corinna wanted to leave the memory of her glory in Desmont. She knew that if her parents kept the house, which was always pointed out, first, to visitors, Desmont would remember her. They sold the bungalow and the old car.

In New York, Corinna and Eddie took a suite at the Ritz. Corinna liked the name of it, and things about it she'd read in magazines. Later, when she found where to live, they took an apartment in the East Eighties.

## VIII

CORINNA phoned to Alma a few days after she got to New York. Alma had rented, furnished, a hideously over-decorated apartment on Central Park West. The Whites had made a few friends, college friends of Lester's, whom they had looked up, after getting to town, business acquaintances. Alma awaited another addition to her family and was not going out much, so Lester welcomed Corinna and Eddie with real joy.

It was fun, then, in New York. Lester and Alma unconsciously looked to Corinna for leadership. Corinna was clever enough to make the most of Lester's friends. But Lester's salary was not as large as Corinna had been led to suppose and he was trying to save, so to her it seemed as if the Whites were living in extreme poverty. They had only two servants, a maid and a nurse for the baby. Alma was not a good manager and she was growing quite stout.

After the second baby came, Alma was not at all well and couldn't go out much. So Lester accompanied the Staylers on their visits to the theatre and the opera. Corinna bought a very new, smart car. Her own apartment was well managed. Her blue eyes were growing sharper these days. She was learning how to do things the correct way.

Eddie got along very nicely in business, though a bit slowly, Corinna thought. He still demurred at so many of her expenditures and she did have a hard time getting the things she wanted, needed, in fact. When she rented a new apartment and had it decorated by a still smarter firm of decorators than those who had done the Desmont house, he grew almost angry. His position was not equal to things like that, it seemed. Corinna cried then. After all of the sacrificing she had done, when she was first married, to help Eddie succeed—at least she should be able to have a few of the things she wanted, now—

Eddie's firm was absorbed by a great oil merger, about that time. It seemed that Eddie had distinct executive ability, so he went with the new firm at a nice increase in salary. He was glad of it. He was getting badly in debt, again, and he had hoped to start saving. His shoulders were quite round now and he was almost bald. But he was still silent and gentle. "If you only had a little 'get up,' a little 'pep,'" Corinna told him, "you'd get ahead. How do you think these millionaires got their start? They were all country boys like you. We haven't a country house or a town house or anything, don't own a thing but this one little car and some furniture and only three pieces of that are genuine antiques. When I think of all the things other women have—"

Lester, it seemed, didn't get along so well in New York. Alma didn't like it, either. She was lonesome for Desmont, where she was a person of importance. She spoke of it to Corinna. Didn't it seem to Corinna, now, that it was better to be a big frog in a little puddle? Corinna couldn't agree. She had other things to think of, just then.

Lester's firm told him they would gladly send him back to Desmont as manager of the local company. He'd been only assistant before, so it was really in the nature of a promotion. Alma was glad of it. Her father's bank had been under some sort of cloud, and Mr. Glover had felt it best to withdraw while there was still opportunity and devote more time to drinking, so things weren't as bright as they had been. Alma felt that if she and Lester were back in Desmont things would improve. The two babies could have more room, a more normal life, too. She felt that New York was no place to raise babies.

When Lester and Alma left New York, Corinna was surprised to find how little their leaving affected her. She had met some new people who were proving rather interesting. She had met them through friends of Lester's and business acquaintances of Eddie's. It seemed as if Eddie were always busy, even in the evenings. So these new friends were kind enough to include Corinna in their merrymaking. They went to the theatre and to the roof-gardens, afterwards. In the afternoon there was dancing in the café,—this was two years ago,—and Corinna had a gay winter. It took money, of course, for she entertained at dinners, and learned to like bridge, and clothes were getting more expensive all the time. She told Eddie that if he were like other men, more ambitious, he wouldn't have to work so many hours, but could make more money and take things easier.

A year later they bought a country place on Long Island. Corinna felt that she simply couldn't stand rented homes a minute longer. Besides, there had to be some place where she could entertain her friends properly in return for the hospitalities she received.

## IX

Corinna met Channing Debross that year. Channing was about five years younger than Corinna, but neither of them seemed to mind it. Channing was an architect, in fact he was with the firm who designed the Long Island house and he was dreadfully artistic and ambitious. He hated to work. Corinna couldn't blame him. So he spent whole days under the trees at Witchmere, talking over his plans. He had wonderful blond hair, thick and inclined to wave a little. Corinna told him that it was funny, because he was the first blond man she had ever liked. Usually, one likes opposites, you know. She had preferred dark men. As Eddie was quite bald, Channing couldn't decide what colour his hair had been. But then, Eddie was so busy, Channing really didn't have a chance to see him very often. Channing was a dear boy, Corinna thought. He knew so many of the right things; he had so much personality and charm. She saw him frequently in the months that followed.

Eddie told Corinna, one day, that he had to take a business trip to Okla-

homa. His firm was establishing some offices in some of the small Oklahoma and Texas towns that were good oil centres—they had bought up a lot of land—and reorganizing some of the existing offices. Corinna might like to go, too. He knew how she hated travelling, dirty travelling at that, but he was going to Desmont and she'd often said, during the past years, that she'd like to go there again for a short visit.

Corinna thought of Lester. She had not thought of him for quite a while. Here would be a chance, a real chance, for triumph. She told Eddie she'd be glad to go to keep him company. It seemed too horrible that he couldn't borrow a private car, but on account of the railroad conditions—

Corinna added a few things to her already complete wardrobe; they'd decided that three trunks would have to do. She'd take Mitchell along, for she'd be helpless without a maid, and Mitchell knew all about her clothes and how to brush her hair, it was coming out just a little and had to be treated with tonic, not a bleach, really, just something that brought the lights out. Corinna decided that she'd go right on to Desmont, with just Mitchell, and Eddie could arrange to come there a few days later and make the trip home with her.

Her father and mother—Roy was in France—met her at the train in the car she'd ordered for them a year before. She was sorry to see that prosperity didn't agree with her parents. Her mother was entirely too fat, and her father showed unmistakable signs of drinking. Why was it that nearly all masculine citizens of small towns in prohibition states started drinking rather hard at fifty? She was glad she had taken Eddie away from there.

The old house was rather nice. How quaint and small it was. How primitive to have liked Elizabethan things! Still, it was done far better than anything else in Desmont. How small Desmont looked and worn and ugly! Surely she hadn't cared—about this place—about what these people thought! But Lester, of course—he had been the one. She put off seeing him. She was glad she was out when he and Alma called.

Corinna saw Lester at the dance given for her at the Country Club in the new ballroom. She wore white and was glad she was still young enough for it, and some pearls Eddie had given her on her birthday—though he hadn't known about it until he saw them nor realized what the gift had meant until he got the bill. When she saw Lester, the same empty feeling came to her that had come to her on the two previous occasions. Was—this the person who had caused all of the strivings? Why, Lester was uninteresting, plain. His features were sharp and drawn—perhaps it was the alkali in Oklahoma—and his hair was getting thin. She never noticed, before, how sallow he was. Now that she thought of it, Eddie was more cosmopolitan looking than Lester; Eddie, little and gentle and bald and usually forgotten entirely.

She danced with Lester three times. He didn't know any of the new steps. She felt almost sorry for him.

Still, when she looked at Alma, she thought they were pretty well mated. Alma had grown even stouter and her hair was dingy and arranged in a horrible stringy fashion. Her dress was a shade of pink she should never have worn, nor anyone else for that matter. There were three babies—they'd been pointed out to Corinna on the street—a fat little boy, two indefinite, stupid-faced younger girls.

During the dance, Eddie came in, unexpectedly. He'd finished with the other towns sooner than he expected. They could leave the next day, if she liked, when he finished in Desmont.

"I've just to appoint a man here, a local manager, you know. And I know all these boys. It won't take long."

Corinna smiled fondly at Eddie. She hadn't realized how nice he was. His wrinkles, especially between his eyes, were pretty deep, but in spite of his

gentleness and his pale eyes there was something she rather liked about him—

Suddenly a thought came to Corinna and she smiled again. She told Eddie about it.

"They say, you know, that his firm isn't doing much here. If you ask Lester White, I'm sure he'd be glad to change. He knows the business, too. You wouldn't have to break him in. And we know his people and that he's reliable."

Eddie nodded. He came back in a little while, between dances, to tell Corinna that Lester had accepted. "Now we can get away from here any time you say."

"The sooner the better," said Corinna. "Of course, I'm glad to see everyone. But this town—stifling! How do they stand it? Let's take the morning train out—if there is a morning train."

She danced again with Lester. And, at her feet, she and the other knew, lay Desmont. The man who had turned her down for a richer, more prominent girl was dancing with her, and, as he looked at her, Corinna knew that she need not feel grieved because he had "spurned" her. They walked out on the porch, after the dance.

"Corinna," Lester said, very low, "I wonder if you know how much I've thought of you, missed you. You seem so wonderful, like out of a different world, honestly. All my life, it seems to me, I've been thinking of you, Corinna. To think that one time—oh, Corinna, what a fool I've been. I wonder—if—if you care a little about me—" He put out his hand.

Corinna felt his hand tremble. He was quite sincere. The fight had gone out of his eyes. There was only admiration there, now.

Then, quite gently, Corinna pushed Lester's hand away and smiled.

"You are a nice boy," she said, "and I shall always be quite fond of you." And she led the way on to the dance floor.

## THE FALL OF THE YEAR

By Muna Lee

THE blackbird flies before the cold,
The painted grosbeaks go;
Not any tanager is so bold
As to brave the snow.

There's a stormy look about the skies,
There's trouble in the west—
And love, who's old and very wise,
Love flies off with the rest.

WOMAN is at once the serpent, the apple and the cholera morbus.

# UNE NUIT BLANCHE

By Bernice Carter

WITH slippers on her feet and flowers in her hair, she stole out very quietly, and closed the front door behind her.

If only Mother wouldn't wake until she got away!

It was so hot in the house, and she knew the nicest place to go. . . . Of course it wasn't as nice as the country, where there were real stone walls, and running water, and tall green weeds were growing. . . .

But it looked so cool that afternoon, and when two doves flew down from somewhere, and fluttered in the water, it had seemed quite real. . . . If only those officers in the corner had finished their lemon and soda . . . she wouldn't like them to see her like this in her nightgown. . . . And she hoped that man in the grey suit with the corn-flowers in his buttonhole was gone . . . he had looked so gloomy, he frightened her . . . and the Head Waiter had watched him . . . maybe he was a spy or something. . . .

She doesn't remember how she got downtown, but once in Forty-sixth Street it was easy. Cabs were still drawn up at the curb, and people came and went . . . but she pulled her cape up closer around her and went brazenly by them. . . . Somehow she managed to get by the door, and through the lobby, then she threaded her way very carefully among the deserted chairs and tables in the darkened dining-room, and presently she found the place. . . .

Moonlight sifting in through the sky-light made it seem all queer and blue, and from somewhere outside three twinkling lights were reflected like little silver stair steps in the water. . . . Two doves ruffled their wings above her, and cooed to each other, and she seemed to hear music . . . a quaint little, faint little strain from "Pelleas and Melisande." . . .

She pulled off her slippers and put them carefully on the table where she had had a cocktail in the afternoon, and then . . . Oh, lovely, wonderful bliss . . . she was paddling in cool, clear water. . . .

At the breakfast table in the morning her Mother said:

"Blanche dear, I hope you had a nice night. I was worried about you in my sleep. I kept dreaming that I went to your room and couldn't find you. . . . And the clock on your table kept ticking—'In-the-Jap-a-nese-gar-den-at-the-Ritz.'"

LOVE begins as the selfishness of two persons jointly. It ends as the selfishness of two persons separately.

# THE LOVERS

By L. M. Hussey

ON a white table placed next the window, a fragment of thinly beaten gold-leaf, glass enclosed, fluttered curiously. He stood looking down at the apparatus, comprehending fully the mysterious activity of the purplish metallic film. Yet, for the moment, its movements did not wholly engross him. He glanced out of the window; the afternoon sun shone on his face; he watched his wife as she walked through the garden. She came toward the house and when she saw him at the window, she smiled at him. Her head was thrown back and the topmost coils of her hair were glamorous with sunlight. He smiled, returning her smile.

She disappeared under the line of the porch. In a few seconds he heard the sound of her footsteps ascending the stairs. For a moment, as he had watched her, the expression of his face had been almost touchingly naïve; his pleasure in the sight of her was apparent. Now he frowned a little; a look of concentration came into his face, depriving it of its boyish naïveté, and he shook his shoulders slightly as if disburdening them of some slight but annoying encumbrance. He bent over the table, his palms pressed down upon the smooth top, peering intently at the frail sheet of fluttering metal.

She came into the room quietly and he did not hear her. Just inside the doorway she stopped and looked at him. He was alone; his young assistant had gone for the afternoon. His profile was presented to her, luminously outlined in the bright light. Her eyes fastened upon his face, provoked by the concentration of his features. She studied him as an enigma, a little annoyed. After a moment her mood softened. She approached him quietly.

He was watching the gold-leaf electroscope intently, oblivious to her nearness. As from a slate she had been sponged from his mind, that was now written over only with the concerns of his scientific absorption. He started when she touched him; he turned his face to her swiftly; for a second there was no recognition in his eyes.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

Her fingers lingered on his shoulder caressingly and a small, provocative smile curved on her lips.

The appreciation of her came back into his senses like a warm breath, vaguely scented. He had not yet lost his half-formed wonder at the intimacy of living with her—a wonder that took its shadowy embodiment from her sheer femininity and his naïve inexperience of women. He looked at her smooth face curving with allure into the gracile lines of her neck and sloping shoulders. He put out his hand and touched her cheek. At once she circled him with her arms and kissed him.

As if defensively, he remembered her question.

"Look at this," he said. He turned his eyes to the table. "Matter is absolutely breaking down there. Part of it is going into simpler forms—part of it into nothing at all! Just like a candle being snuffed out! Every time a disintegrating particle comes into contact with the gold-leaf, it trembles."

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "Radium again! Really, Harry, it's not half so interesting as I imagined it might be. I always thought the stuff made a

bright light in the dark. I think Mr. Harry Millington is more interesting than all the expensive radium in the world. Aren't you going to quit this afternoon? I want you!"

"It's not radium this time," he persisted. "Only mercury. That's radioactive, too—isn't it curious? Everything is probably radioactive—and disintegrating. I believe I'm near to finding out how to control the disintegration."

She looked at him a second somewhat mockingly and questioned him like an adult probing the humorous and aimless fancies of a child.

"And Harry, dearest, what good will that do?"

"Well . . . if you mean practical good . . ."

He paused and looked at her, detached and thoughtful.

"It would solve all the power problems for ever," he went on. "It would give us the almost inconceivable use of intra-atomic energy. There would—"

She had put her two hands on his shoulders and was laughing at him. The tinkling noise of her laughter was resonated from the bare walls of the room. For just a second a surge of indignation sent a surge of warmth to his cheeks; he had merged her individuality into the wider identity of an audience; he was making his exposition to her impersonally, as to one of the scientific bodies that listened to him with silence and respect. Her laughter broke in upon his sentence like a grave discourtesy.

His anger passed when he looked at her. He yielded himself to the charm of her mysterious loveliness. In the laboratory she stood apart and incongruous, the beautiful opposed to the useful, the emotional set against the rational. The gleam of glass and shining metal surrounded her and the sensual persuasiveness of her allure asserted itself among these precise and delicate instruments of his labours with a flamboyance that was almost contemptuous.

As Millington looked at the glow of her flushed, warm cheeks, the backward tilt of her head, the glamorous net of her copper hair, a sense of helplessness troubled him, an apprehension of irrationality, a perception of unfathomed and fantastic forces. For a moment, his nature, trained to the desire of understanding and precision, opposed itself rebelliously to the adventurous unreason of his senses. And then he put his arm about her and they walked out of the room together.

Her desire, it seemed, was to re-establish constantly the setting of their first days together. Before their marriage they had met in the mountains in the early spring. She now approximated those scenes by driving him in their car through the country roads until they came to a thick woods. Here she stopped the machine and disclosed a supper packed up in several pasteboard boxes. They sat on a fallen log and spread out sandwiches and thin slices of cake in front of them. The sun fell behind the trees, leaving an orange reminiscence to fade out in the sky; the woods grew black and purple; her face was luminously pallid, a pale oval of chatoyant ivory that came close to him and laid the touch of cool skin against his cheek.

As on all such occasions, the panorama of his entire intimacy with her passed before his eyes. They had not yet known each other a year; they had been married only a few months. Nevertheless, the space of their acquaintance seemed to cover a period of time long and ardent—and in an increasing measure, exhausting. He noticed that now; he noticed an inability to sustain his fervour as in the earlier months of knowing her. Each kiss she gave him seemed to take subtly away from him some measure of his eagerness. With the chromatic glamour of her person she could still draw his mind out of the white, clean passion of his scientific enthusiasm, but the periods of his abstraction grew less long. Even this evening, while they sat silently, close to each other, his acute percep-

tion of her mystery dimmed, and he thought of other things.

She spoke to him softly, in her low, resonant voice.

"What are you thinking about?"

His eyes were raised to the stars, his expression as remote as them. He did not answer her.

"Tell me!"

He turned to her quickly, realizing that she was questioning him.

"A little problem," he murmured. "I was. . . ."

She drew away from him swiftly; her eyes seemed very big in the dusk oval of her face.

"You weren't thinking about me at all!"

She waited a moment, as if hopeful of some denial, but he said nothing. Then she arose suddenly and an agitated swirl of air, scented with her perfume, blew for an instant against his face.

"Come, we'll go home!" she exclaimed.

Her anger was obvious in her voice. He stood up also, and attempted to secure her hand. She turned half around abruptly and walked with long steps toward the car.

"Lilla, what is the matter?"

"I'm going home!"

"Tell me what's the matter?"

She said no more to him but got into the car. He climbed in beside her; she switched on the headlights and two shafts of white, searching light passed out into the dusk; the car started with a furious clatter of the engine. She drove with her eyes straight in front of her, her chin pointed, her profile sharp, her hair pressed down and back by the wind.

Her thorough anger with the man at her side was not unmixed with scorn. The increasing evidence of his inability to sustain their emotional communion lessened his stature in her eye. More and more he lost the fervour of their early weeks together; more and more he turned from the glow of their passion to futilities, to incomprehensible and foolish aims, to the pursuit of the obscure and meaningless. She turned her face a little and caught a blurred image of his pale profile near her. A faint sense of mystery, a slight uneasiness, as in the presence of the unknown, stirred her. She did not fully comprehend him.

He was angry and irritated; he was out of sympathy with her irrationality. Every now and then her arm pressed against him as she manipulated the wheel. There was an inseparableness in her nearness that dismayed him. Like a disordered landscape revealed by a lightning flash, their relation was suddenly illuminated in his mind. He saw the difference of their hopes, their incommensurable spirits, set against the sardonic background of their sworn oneness.

Then the clearness of his perception failed; his mind faltered in its grasp of these things; his eyes wandered out to the road. Other thoughts came to him. In a moment he had forgotten her and he gave himself up almost voluptuously to the ascetic passion of the purely intellectual.

He was almost startled when he found that the car had stopped. He jumped out quickly and waited for his wife to follow him. She sat motionless for a moment, and then put her foot on the running board. He held out his hand to her. She stepped down to the grass; he still retained her hand; they faced each other. In a moment he had his arms about her and was kissing her. She responded with the warm pressure of her lips.

A strand of hair touched his cheek like an exquisite and subtle caress. All the tingling pleasure of the touch of her was in his senses.

## II

THE next afternoon Lilla stood in the doorway of the laboratory, staring in. Millington had gone to the city to purchase materials and the large room was occupied only by his assistant. The latter was unaware of her scrutiny. He sat on a high stool, his back to her,

facing a chemical balance in a glass case. The sliding door was raised and he deftly withdrew small platinum weights from a red weight-box and conveyed them to the right-hand scale pan of the balance, twisting the arrestment knob of the instrument at each addition.

Lilla watched the short movements of his arms with a faint frown. His activity was incomprehensible to her; he was directed by her husband and he reflected Millington's inscrutable and irritating aims. Her eyes passed from him to wander over the rest of the room.

Everywhere was the glint of glassware, the polished surface of shining wood, the high-lights reflected from brass and steel. To the fantastic and meaningless contours of these objects, Lilla felt a vibrant animosity; they assumed the personification of mute but malignly intentioned enemies. These were the shapes that opposed her and increasingly they drew Millington out of her presence. Her fingers tensed at her sides. A fury to destroy made her face hard. She desired to go into the room, throw this glass and wood and metal to the floor, trample and smash. She took a step forward and the young man at the balance case turned and saw her.

He stood up, smiling with evident embarrassment. He was younger than Millington; his face had less aloofness and detachment.

He looked at Lilla, waiting for her to speak.

She said nothing and he flushed a little.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Mrs. Millington?" he asked.

"No, nothing. I was just looking in."

He smiled again and fumbled with the edges of his white coat. He did not know what to say to her; her presence made him vaguely uneasy. He looked at her copper hair, heaped up profusely on her head like a pile of heated metal drawn out into numberless glowing threads. He withdrew his eyes swiftly, for he did not wish her to perceive his admiration. She spoke to him again.

"What are you doing?"

He half turned to the balance.

"I was—"

"Don't tell me!"

Her voice interrupted him quickly, almost passionately.

"You don't like these things, do you, Mrs. Millington?"

She looked at him for a moment, a distant expression in her eyes, as if she only half perceived him.

"I . . . hate them . . ." she said, deliberately.

He took a step toward her, an eager gesture. He experienced an intense sense of pleasure. He was receiving her confidence; she was talking to him intimately! He dared to look at her face for a full second, with his eyes widened. He was glad that Millington was not in the laboratory and he could indulge therefore the pleasant feeling he had in being alone with her.

His admiration was apparent to her and she understood his emotions. At other times she had observed this admiration when she talked with him, penetrating with ease his efforts at concealment. He had somewhat amused her. Now, for the first time, she found a vague pleasure and a vague excitement in knowing that she pleased him. He ministered also to her slipping assurance, to the confidence she required in her charm. As he talked to her she examined him with interest. A blurred, indefinite idea that he might prove useful took shape in her mind. She was more intimate and gracious to him than she had ever been before.

Millington returned before nightfall, but she failed in an effort to secure him for herself. He went to work immediately and did not retire until late at night. Lilla spent the evening alone out of doors. She sat on some cushions near a tall hedge, almost motionless. A few leaves were beginning to fall and they lay about her curled and crisp. Occasionally she took one in her hand and crumpled it to powder. The stir of

many crickets was in the air. She stared into the shadows like a dim, silent watcher waiting for news in the night. Silently she made schemes in her head.

Inasmuch as she comprehended nothing of her husband's work, she did not understand that he had entered upon a very engrossing and perhaps culminating phase of his immediate investigation. Within a few days he seemed to have withdrawn himself from her utterly. For several weeks she struggled to secure him, to charm him, to arouse him to her fascination. She practised stratagems upon him like an opposing general; she utilized the instrument of her anger; he was oblivious. She summoned all the conscious weapons of her allure; she sought to please him with caresses; he was indifferent. He grew mysterious to her, and the more desirable.

One morning she besieged him boldly and suffered her most apparent rebuff. She went into the laboratory several hours before luncheon. She found him working with his assistant, the two side by side. She had made herself very appealing; her face was flushed subtly, her eyes mobile in their expressions, her hair almost luminously lustrous. She stepped across the room and stood near the table at which the two men laboured, watching them ingenuously, like a child. They finished connecting together a chain of apparatus, and then she spoke.

"Done, Harry?" she asked.

He turned a moment, glancing at her only.

"Hello," he said.

"Mr. Davidson can work it out for himself, now," she said. "You must come with me this morning!"

She put her hand on his arm, looked straight into his eyes, smiled at him.

Millington stared at her, frowning. He saw her smiling lips, her reddened cheeks, her expectant eyes. They all were at once remote and immensely trivial to him. The inconsequence of her wishes angered him. He restrained a sudden impulse to shake her violently, shake understanding into her. He took her hand from his sleeve.

"Lilla," he said, "you musn't come in here in the morning."

He turned away from her and bent over the table.

Her eyes remained on his white coat, his stooping shoulders, his brown, closely trimmed hair. The assistant walked quietly to the other end of the room. Now Millington seemed oblivious that she stood near. She watched his moving hand and caught glimpses of his intent profile. There was almost an insanity in his concentration, a madness in his obsession. He played endlessly and endlessly with little shapes of glass, little grotesqueries in metal. He wrote cabalistically, meaninglessly, into a little notebook. He preferred these things to the glow of her lips, to the caressing circle of her arms!

She stared a moment longer and then walked out of the room.

## III

THROUGH the distorting, refractive mist of her baffled emotions, she endeavoured to analyze her position. The best she achieved was a tantalizing mystery. A curious little memory from her childhood came back to her like a symbol. She remembered a gold coin that had been given to her on her eighth birthday. The colour of the metal, the shape and size of the coin, the lustrous woman's head upon it, had fascinated her. She carried it about with her for days, clinked it on stones, played with it at the side of an artificial lake in the garden. One day it rolled over the stones and dropped down into the clear water. She peered in, and under the slight ripples blown up by the wind, she saw the golden money, enlarged, its contours shifting and remote. She was afraid to tell of her loss. Each day she stared in at the coin. She could see it; it was there, but she could not reach it. She could recall the pleasant weighty feel of it in her small hands: Its nearness, yet

its impossibility of attainment, tormented her for weeks, until she confided in the gardener and he fished the disk of metal out of the water and gave it back into her keeping.

As if under a separating and impassable depth, she saw her early relations with Millington. Like something lost and precious they lay within sight, but distorted and unattainable. It seemed to her that if she could once more secure her desire within her grasp, she would hold it fast for ever, with never another losing. For several days she was held inactive by reminiscences. Then a measure of her assurance returned to her and she resolved on a plan. Her first step was to take Davidson, the assistant, out driving with her.

He was quite astonished at her invitation. She made it openly, in the presence of Millington. After a moment of embarrassed hesitation, the young man agreed. Lilla observed that her husband showed no surprise at this unusual manœuvre. They had little to say to each other on their first drive. Lilla drove the car fast and savagely; Davidson did not understand her, did not comprehend her motive; he was troubled with a shyness in her presence that approximated fear.

She made it a habit to be seen with him for a certain time each day. At meals she smiled at him with a saccharine graciousness. She consulted him, in odd corners, over trivial concerns, but she made her voice low, intimate, almost conspiratorial. When she saw him initially in the morning she greeted him with effusion. Sometimes, when she knew that Millington was in the laboratory, she came in and watched him silently. Yet Millington said nothing, showed no annoyance, was oblivious.

Several weeks went over and the chromatic autumn days were definitely established. By this time the assistant had rid himself of a measure of his embarrassment. He wondered less at his happiness and accepted the pleasure of these new circumstances at a gift of good fortune. His emotions expanded, like a flower opening. It was at length difficult for him to restrain his spoken admiration when Lilla was alone with him. When he dropped his eyes to her hands their whiteness filled him with a wish to seize them, cover them with kisses, feel the smooth touch of them. He told himself that he loved her and at nighttime he made speeches for her, inventing a hundred declarations, considering her response in a hundred moods. Sometimes he forgot all about Millington.

When he was with her an actual declaration increasingly troubled his lips, threatening to break their silence. This happened at last in a moment when he was alone with her in the laboratory.

Lilla came in cool and white, walking with a consciousness of her exuberant charm. She expected to find Millington there, but he had gone out of the room for a moment and only the assistant stood among the inimical appliances Lilla despised.

She smiled at him; he suddenly spoke to her.

"I can't go on in this way," he said. "You must know that I love you!"

She was not surprised. She stood looking at him with a mood that was curiously speculative. Certainly she felt no response, yet it was evident to her that she stirred him profoundly. It was not unpleasant to know that he loved her. She wondered just what she would say to him now. And then she caught the sound of Millington's approaching footsteps.

Before he came through the door she experienced a sudden understanding of his attitude toward Davidson and herself—his blind indifference. All her manœuvring had been futile. It was useless to go on as she had been going. She heard his step at the door and in an instant despairing determination to impress him, arouse him, make him see and feel, she moved swiftly to Davidson's side, put her arms about him, and pressed her lips upon

his astonished face. She knew that her husband had stopped in the doorway and was looking at them.

In a second she drew away, turning her face toward Millington and simulating an immense surprise. Bright spots of red glowed in her cheeks; she drew in her breath rapidly. Bewildered, white-faced, the assistant stood near her, saying nothing.

After another moment Lilla turned to him and spoke in a tense, quick whisper.

"Leave me now, please!"

At once he obeyed her. He walked toward the door and Millington let him pass, ignored him.

Then Millington moved slowly across the room and stood by one of the white tables. He absently picked up a little glass picnometer and turned it back and forth in his fingers.

Lilla took a step toward him.

"Aren't you going to do anything?" she asked.

"What do you mean?"

"He kissed me!"

Before speaking he rested his eyes upon her face as if he found an enigma there.

"Lilla," he said, "why are you lying to me?"

She found no words to say to him. He waited a moment and then went on:

"I don't know what you want of me, nor what end you're seeking. It seems to me there's a certain reasonable relation for you and me. One thing is sure, whatever you want to do, I can't let you intrude on my work here. I'm at a point where I must give all my thoughts to the investigation I'm making. Can't you see that?"

She looked at his pale, intent face, out of which passed his hateful words. The note of reasonableness, his attempt to argue with her, filled her with a swift, burning anger as if each of his quiet syllables had concealed a bitter insult. He leaned back upon the table upon which was placed a connected line of abstruse and delicate apparatus. The gleam of it was behind him, maddening her.

He continued to look at her, but never for a second did he understand her. Vaguely, empirically, he knew what she desired: she wanted to take him away from that which seemed of most importance to him. The passionate, consuming desire of him, the jealousy of all his moments that were not given over to her ministry, he never an instant sensed. She had grown childishly and intolerably trivial to him. Her puerile irrationality aroused his impatience and created an impulse to take her by the shoulders and shake her like a stubborn child.

She could tolerate the gleaming instruments at his back no longer. She lunged toward him madly. She whirled him aside like a leaf in the vortex of a wind. She grasped the white table and turned it up on end; glass and metal slid to the hard floor, twisting, smashing. The sound caressed her ears and a ferine satisfaction surged in her senses. The abominable shapes of other glass, other metal, were all about her. She ran toward the next table. Before she reached it he seized her, both wrists secured in his tight fingers. He twisted her around until, panting, a strand of her copper hair fallen down over her cheek like a sinister banner, she faced him.

Only a few inches apart they stared at each other. But between them there was the illimitable, the tragic and ironic distance of their immense difference, their fantastic incompatibility.

He held her a second whilst a growing sense of what she had done aroused his anger like a black, gathering storm. Hers was the trivial and futile carried to madness. She was the malicious child gone insane. He dropped her wrists and clutched her shoulders tightly; he shook her back and forth; his anger flared the more and his fingers slipped to her white, strained throat.

Suddenly he knew that he was mad himself, and he tore away his hands; the woman dropped to the floor, tragically inert. He bent over her

quickly, turned up her face, stared at her with wide, alarmed eyes. He put his hand on her breast: she was not breathing.

## IV

At last he stood up. There was nothing he could do for her. Opposing thoughts jangled in his mind like a mad cacophony. He endeavoured to collect into a reasonable, coherent chain all that had happened. The ordered method of his scientific thought failed him. About him the laboratory was quiet; save for the pitiful little heap of broken glass on the floor everything was in place as usual. Those few splintered fragments could never have brought about this catastrophic moment! An infernal and fantastic accident had befallen him. The futility he had felt in her seemed to have passed to himself. Forces implacable and unseen had opposed him; he was their trivial and defeated antagonist.

Slowly he walked out of the room. A great necessity, apprehended without words, drew him on. He passed from the house. He walked a mile or more across the fields, crunching the red and yellow fallen leaves under his unheeding feet. After a time he saw the river, laid over with gold sunlight, bending in toward him. He approached the tall bank.

A child was playing near him. The stream below moved by smoothly, majestically, in silence. With his arms at his sides he stepped over and dropped down into the flowing water. It closed over him like a symbol, remorselessly.

The child ran back from the bank, calling in a frightened voice to someone in a distant field.

# THEN AND NOW

By Kenneth Tirowen

I NEVER knew how strong life was
Till love passed by my gate;
I never knew the wrong life does
Till love walked in—too late.

WOMAN was the last thing that God made. The product shows both His experience and His fatigue.

AFTER all, the wicked are less terrible than the foolish. The wicked sometimes take a day off.

A MAN never knows beforehand what a woman will do. Neither does a woman.

# THE BOSS

## By John C. Cavendish

RUDY was a long man, composed angularly. No clothes ever conformed to the sharp, unexpected corners of his shoulders, his elbows, his knobby knees, so his habit inevitably flapped about him like a slack sail. He had a somewhat melancholy face, featured by a large, undetermined mouth, a nose with a purple tendency, small eyes, incongruously and feebly fierce, a brief altitude of brow cut with premature wrinkles. His hair was straight, black and always too long so that in back it curled up over his collar, sparsely, like thin, discouraged grass. He was still a young man.

In the daytime he earned his living assisting in the purchase of oils in a compounding house. In the evening he went to the moving pictures, or he occupied himself in his room, dolorously twanging a mandolin, until the boarder next door rapped on the wall with a shoe, whereat he laid away his instrument and went to bed. Yet he was not a person devoid of dreams.

His room was decorated with pictures of motion picture actresses and he frequently imagined himself with a woman of his own. He thought nothing could be better than to become the head of a family. His sense of authority swelled with the notion. He fancied himself ruling his household with an inflexible and patriarchal firmness. These thoughts made him impatient to find a girl who would marry him.

One evening as he turned away from staring into a show-window he collided with a young woman coming out of the shop door. The accident was his own fault, for he had been very abstracted. He heard the girl make a sharp, angry exclamation. He took off his hat and endeavoured to apologize.

"Please excuse me, Miss," he said, "I didn't see you."

"You might look where you are going," she answered.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I was looking into this window."

The girl had not yet turned her face up to him; she was bending over, vigorously smoothing out her dress. He saw that she had plump, white hands, a white throat, and pretty yellow hair. He waited in front of her, wondering what he ought to do. At last she raised her head and met his eyes.

They looked at each other a moment and finally the girl began to smile. He smiled in return; she dropped her eyes and giggled a little. He felt greatly relieved.

"This is a funny way to meet each other," he said.

"Oh! So we've met each other, have we?"

"Well, I *want* to know you," he said.

She made no reply to this. He looked at her a moment, appraisingly. Her stature was less than his, but she was formed compactly; he liked her plumpness. He saw that she had brown eyes, contrasting pleasantly with her brown hair, a full red mouth, and smooth, white cheeks. He spoke to her again.

"Lord!" he exclaimed. "I was surprised when I bumped into you. Honestly, I didn't see you at all!"

Now she was in an excellent humour.

"Well, I won't hate you," she said. "I'll forgive you!"

Rudy was elated. No such good fortune had been a part of his expectancy. With a manifestation of assurance, sur-

prising to some aloof and critical entity in his brain, he took the girl by the arm and walked off with her.

They were instantly intimate. He told her his name, explained his occupation, briefly adumbrated his family history, said that he was fond of music and played a little himself; asked her which she liked the better, popular or classic music? She reciprocated with her own confidences. Her name, she said, was Beatrice; she lived with her married sister; she liked music and would love to hear him play his mandolin; her preference was not rag-time, but good, classical pieces. When they reached her home, Rudy was entirely at ease and comfortably soothed with the sense of having known her for a long time.

She took him into a small apartment and there he met her sister and brother-in-law. These two were occupying a brief, cubical sitting room when Beatrice and her acquaintance appeared. They greeted Rudy cordially, the brother-in-law spoke to him of the weather, the sister appraised him with shrewd, quick glances, and then both unobtrusively retired. The girl looked at him and smiled significantly. She crossed the room to the sofa and sat down. Rudy followed, and seated himself at her side.

He let his hand touch hers. She responded by an instant pressure of her closing fingers. He put his arm about her and she leaned toward him; he felt her blonde hair against his cheek, singularly exquisite, soft, tantalizing, he thought. He was wholly and highly delighted. He put his arm up until his hand touched her cheek, astonishingly smooth, like the surface of a fresh leaf. He pushed her face around toward his own and then, hesitating a second, he kissed her lips. He observed, with delight, that she closed her eyes. He was very happy.

## II

He went away from her later, the guest of many fancies. The appeal of her smooth cheeks, her yielding lips, her xanthous hair he merged into the wish of possession. There were delights he longed to own. He wanted them in his keeping, the guardianship and monopoly of them. He saw with infinitely more directness now the admirable vision of married life. Above even its strange delights he perceived his dignity in that position. He would be inevitably considerate, unfailingly kind, but firm. In the small kingdom of his family he would make the necessary decisions with a careful vision. He went off to sleep with intimate portraits from the future projected luminously into his mind; in the final one, before he lost consciousness, he was seated at the head of a long table, carving a roast, while his wife and four or five or six children waited quietly, with desiderate discipline, to be served.

The same evening Beatrice sat in front of her small mirror smoothing out her hair, running a comb through the long fustic strands with slow, regular sweeps of her bare arm, as if in unconscious rhythm with her thoughts. The lids were narrowed a little over her brown eyes, but the expression of calculation that this gave to her face was mingled also with a hesitant elation hovering in a smile that was no more than a shadow on her lips. With a sureness of insight that was a part both of her training and her heritage, she understood the quality of this man from whom she had just parted. She knew that if she managed him, she could marry him.

She had had her moments of romantic dreaming; she had conceived at other times the lover of her heart's desire. But the glints from that engaging tinsel did not blind her an instant from the aspect of more serious business. She was long tired of going to work every day. She knew she would be glad to exchange that necessity for an assured position as a married woman —with a romantic sacrifice at worst no more than a vague and not wholly unpleasant melancholy. This fellow Rudy was obviously steady; he was docile,

manageable, plastic: she could shape him to her wishes; with him she could secure a living with the lines of control in her own hands. At the conclusion of her thinking a resolution overspread her features, obliterating the other emotions that had found their expression there. She gave her hair a final stroke, and stood up to turn out the light.

Two evenings later Rudy presented himself for the second time. On this occasion his sartorial aspect had changed; he'd made an evident effort at personal decoration. He wore a suit of small black and white checks, a flamboyant yellow necktie with green flowers scattered over it, a pair of tan shoes with large, shiny knobs on the toes; even his hair was cut.

Beatrice was not pleased with his outfit. She knew well enough that he would never put on such outrageous neckwear after they were married; she had visions then of adapting the cut of his clothes, in a measure, at least, to the contours of his person; yet she was very gracious to him.

She received him with an instant sympathy, an air of intimacy, a caressing, backward tilt of her head as she smiled at him. She clung to his arm as they walked along the street, let him touch her hand while they sat in the theatre, smiled and laughed at all he had to say. When he brought her home she put her arms about him and kissed him warmly. He went back to his room with the reminiscence of her lips tingling on his mouth.

He spent as many evenings with her as she would allow him. On Sunday they usually went away together for the whole day. Once they visited the sea shore, but their favourite rendezvous was a little creek, not far from the city, where canoes could be rented cheaply. Rudy learned to paddle after a few ineffectual trials. He found a real delight in the soft glide through silent, resilient water, with shadow-speckled sunlight thrown over the glamorous girl in front of him, like a diaphanous and precious mantle. There was a certain quiet stretch he favoured greatly, where long branches hung down romantically and touched the water, brooding, suggestive and tender. Here he liked to drop his paddle in the bottom of the canoe, whilst he cautiously edged himself toward Beatrice, until he could secure her hands and kiss her. He determined that this place should be the setting for his avowal; he longed to ask her to marry him, but that was a valorous hazard for which he had not quite the courage.

Beatrice waited impatiently for his declaration. She understood his timidities, and so she made herself graciously receptive to his love making. She thought this tepid and second-rate, but her manner was always romantic and yielding. She fondled him and kissed him; she let him muss her hair with his caresses; she kept her mouth at a smile. Sometimes she knew that his lips struggled with the words she wanted to hear, but his courage ebbed before they were spoken, and her impatience increased. She determined at last to prompt him boldly.

## III

One evening she invited him to take supper with her at home. During the meal he chatted with her sister and her brother-in-law; he felt at ease, and a domesticity like a warm cloak was thrown over his spirits. After supper the sister and her husband retired quickly to their own room. Beatrice took Rudy into the parlour.

"Don't you want to go anywhere?" he asked her.

"No; I'm tired. Let's sit down here a while," she answered.

They seated themselves on the sofa. He secured one of her hands, over which he passed his fingers, back and forth, soothed by the soft texture of it. Beatrice looked down at the floor. A lighted lamp threw a gilt sheen over the whirls of her yellow hair.

"We've known each other a long time, now," she said.

"Yes," Rudy agreed.

"I often think of the queer way we met each other."

"So do I. It was lucky!"

She said nothing for a second, as if pondering his remark.

"I wonder if it was?" she questioned, finally.

"Why, aren't you—?"

"Oh, I don't mean that I wasn't pleased for us to know each other. But was it just luck? Don't you think these things are sort of—arranged? Suppose we were intended to meet each other?"

She raised her head and looked into his face. Her eyes were partly closed; the lashes curving over them darkened their brown; their expression was remote and mystical. A scarcely expressed and ghostly smile trembled at the corners of her lips. Her head was tilted back a little and the light shone on her white, smooth throat.

"It would be nice to believe that, wouldn't it?" said Rudy.

"Well," she asked. "What do you believe then? Isn't there some intention?"

She leaned toward him a little tensely.

"Why *do* you come to see me?" she asked.

"I—I—"

He faltered badly with answering her sudden question. She opened her eyes, staring at him, frowning.

"Don't you know!"

He took both her hands and drew her close to him, although she made a slight resistance and the tenseness of her body did not yield nor flex to his caress.

"Because—because you're dear to me," he said, clumsily.

As if the sudden wearer of another mask, the frown on her face was gone, her features relaxed into a fluent softness, and like silk bars her lashes drooped over her eyes. She closed her fingers tightly against his retaining hands.

"Do you mean that you want to marry me?" she whispered.

For a second the room was silent, but in that space Beatrice experienced a conquering emotion that gave to her cheeks a physical and discerned warmth, that sent into her perceptions a thrilling assurance and an exultant confidence. She was certain of the words he was about to say; she forgot his shortcomings in her moment of success.

He heard her question and an immense embarrassment, like a palpable burden, was lifted from his spirits. He saw the way opened to him miraculously. He felt her body yield to his embrace; he was conscious of the ardent returning pressure of her fingers.

"Will you marry me?" he asked her.

Suddenly she kissed him straight on the lips and stood up instantly, releasing herself from his retaining hands with a lithe and unexpected swiftness.

"Alice!" she called out.

Her sister came into the room.

"We're engaged to be married," said Beatrice.

The sister gave a small exclamation of pleasure and approached Rudy. He stood up. She kissed him.

"I've got a new brother now," she said.

The brother-in-law appeared. He shook Rudy's hand. He spoke in a humorous strain of married life. The women laughed. The eyes of both threw back the diffused glow of the lamp in scintillant glints of quick fire; they were strangely alert; an unaccountable elation seemed to move in their persons.

Rudy struggled to be happy, yet he was curiously bewildered. These were, in some fantastic way, not his moments; he was important to them, but only with the importance of a necessary pawn. His rôle was other than he had imagined it; there were unfathomable intentions and impulses in the air not in consonance with the patriarchal and dignified simplicity of his own. He was relieved when the sister and brother-in-law were gone again, and Beatrice whispered to him that she would rather he went early this evening. She kissed

him at the door with a notable tenderness; he went away with increased assurance.

## IV

By the time he reached home his ordinary outlook, his normal viewpoint, was restored to him. He laid plans for his married conduct, his beneficent household commandership, like a general outlining a battle. During the weeks that intervened before the ceremony he had the opportunity to mature his most cherished ideas and his more precious concepts. When the day came he was compact with a sense of his own grasp on the destiny of a family. Even his obvious subordination to the bride in the actual business of being married did not greatly shake him. When the final words were pronounced he kissed Beatrice almost as a protector and a father; he felt infinitely moved by his responsibility. They went away together for a honeymoon at the seashore, with conventional bits of confetti clinging here and there to their clothes.

At once Beatrice developed some unexpected qualities. She demonstrated a practical bent, an ability at management, that Rudy had not suspected. It was she who bargained with the room-clerk at the hotel, securing accommodations better than those he was about to accept. In the beginning this aptitude did not displease him, for it offered, he believed, a more ready co-operation with his plans.

When they returned to the city the business of furnishing a small flat was the first thing to occupy their minds. To this purpose Rudy brought a set of thoroughly thought-out notions. The chief points of his programme were a parlour set in mahogany finish, with a player-piano purchased on time, oak furniture in the dining-room, that of a maple aspect in their bedroom. But they finally purchased a number of gilt chairs for the parlour and the player-piano became a Victrola with records, the mahogany finish went over to the dining-room, and the bedroom became white. The changes were suggested by Beatrice.

"But don't you think—?" Rudy had begun to object.

She put her arms about him and kissed him. She ran her fingers through his hair.

"Don't be a silly boy," she said. "You do what I say. You won't be sorry."

But one of the most difficult renunciations for Rudy, in those early married days, was the abandonment of his mandolin. He was immensely surprised when Beatrice objected to it. It seemed, at first, that her objection was irrational and arbitrary; he refused to stop his playing. He was even proof against her cajolery, exercised with the potent weapon of her caresses. It was then that she brought against him a sudden new armament that disconcerted him into surrender.

"Don't you see that that everlasting twanging annoys me!" she cried.

"Well—" Rudy began to argue.

He saw her brown eyes narrow and glaze with a determined hardness. He went on with his expostulation. She made no return, no word; she was silent, as if speech were no longer possible to her. Her silence at length impressed itself upon him. He made an effort to get some reply from her; his aim became less to prove the righteousness of his own case than to bring back simply her normal loquacity. At last he was astonished, appalled, even overwhelmed: she would not speak to him! He put away the mandolin. He laid it in the darkness of a closet shelf, where its shiny surface caught the pale glints of outer lights whenever he chanced to open the door, and sent the reflected beams into his eyes, like a reproach.

He knew well enough, at last, that things were not going with him as they should. He seemed unable, through some subtle and even unfathomable opposition, to grasp that beneficent mastery, that patriarchal and desiderate control, which had been at the soul of his early planning. When moments of his old assurance returned to him—

usually at night when the house was quiet in a sleeping city—his desire seemed around the corner only, an easy obtaining, securable by his own assertion. Again and again he determined on firmness, but each determination was weakened by some special new distraction. He had been married a year now, and he had the disquieting sense of drifting, of even being carried on a current that coursed to goals not in his wishes like a ship that had slipped her anchor.

Beatrice was not unhappy during this year. She had expected little of Rudy as a lover, and although he had fulfilled no more than her meagre anticipation, other interests served to make her living zestful. She found things to combat in her husband, many follies to overcome, nor could all her purposes be achieved by the same means. The variations necessary to her strategy gave her amusement. Yet her interest spent itself at last upon the subtleties as on a game too often played. She tired of being alone with Rudy. As the hour of his nightly return approached an annoyance disturbed her serenity. It occurred to her, like an inspiration, that she was forgetting the rest of the world. She determined to make new acquaintances.

So Rudy's frail content was shaken by fresh phenomena that was presently revealed. An inexplicable and purposeless gregariousness entered into their living. Here and there Beatrice economized and the accumulations were spent in dining out in restaurants. The turn of events surprised him and he acquiesced in them without a protest.

Nor were their evenings at home any longer the quiet intimacy of a pair. Friends seemed to spring up about them like mushrooms. The Victrola came into active service; a dozen dance records appeared in their collections—the rugs were rolled back, the gilt chairs pushed against the wall, and people with whom he was not at ease danced there in his parlour.

Of these things he began to think bitterly. He reflected upon them as he went to work in the morning, or when he returned in the evening, and sometimes even during the hours when he was paid to give his thoughts to other matters; he sat in the street car unheedful of his morning paper, scowling at the passing streets, disturbed, disappointed, saturnine, and in a measure indignant, as one who has been deprived of a fortune, fully planned and quite deserved, by the special, personal act of a malevolent Destiny. He knew there was gathering in him the force for a vociferous outcry.

His distaste for these people that invaded his quiet, the sanctuary of his domesticity, merged eventually into a fervid dislike of a certain woman, who was more and more his wife's companion. She was now an intimate of their household and none but her first name, Anna, was ever used there. She was an intriguing presence, a disruptive agent, a schemer of things unwished. She brought men to the house with whom Rudy had nothing in common, as he had nothing in common with her. He hated to hear her laugh, to see her tuck up the loose strand of her red hair, to listen to the noisy clatter of her tongue. It was she who brought the man Hemmingway to their flat.

He came with half a dozen others. They played cards, danced at close quarters, and sat around destructively on the edge of the chairs drinking claret punch that was served out of a big bowl. From the beginning Beatrice was conscious that he was looking at her. Whenever she glanced in his direction she found his eyes meeting her own, with no wavering at her discovery of this scrutiny. At last she danced with him and he talked to her in a low voice as they moved around the room.

"I'm glad I'm able to speak to you," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"I've been watching you."

"I know you have. Why?"

"You interest me."

"Oh! You don't know anything about me!"

"That makes me want to."

They deftly avoided a collision with another couple. He whirled her in a sudden circle, bringing her clinging close to him.

"I want to talk to you," he said. "When will you take dinner with me?"

She looked up into his face. It was a countenance of ardent potentialities. His dark eyes met her gaze with a fine assurance. She felt a consciousness of his arms that found expression in a thrill; she was aware of the touch of him acutely. In instinctive comparison she thought of Rudy and the glamour of this man that Rudy wholly lacked. He was looking into her eyes, waiting for her to answer him. The sound of the music stopped abruptly and the phonograph needle made a harsh scratching as it moved aimlessly in the empty grooves. She whispered to him in haste, before she left his arms.

"Call me on the telephone," she said.

## V

Rudy became aware of this fellow after he had come to their flat the second or third time. He noticed then his special attentiveness to Beatrice. He appraised the man more acutely and developed an active dislike. It angered him at once to watch the supple smile that Hemmingway could bring to his lips, to hear the low, intimate murmur of his voice as he spoke to Beatrice, to watch the gesturing of his white hands. His animosity for Anna faded into this animosity for a new object. He felt the day when he would reckon these matters with his wife, the day of his inflexible assertion, coming nearer, nearer. He went about with his lips compressed, gathering determination.

But he did not know, for quite a period, that Hemmingway was seeing his wife outside their home. That discovery was an accident. He saw them come out of a restaurant together. They were intent with each other and passed him; he was unobserved. The man leaned forward and spoke down close to Beatrice's ear in a hateful and maddening intimacy.

Rudy stopped on the sidewalk and glared after him melodramatically. This he saw at noon-time; he went back to his work inflamed, aroused, mightily determined. He knew now that he would not let another evening pass; he would express himself at once. The time came to leave his work. He went out still resolved. But a faintness oppressed him as he approached the corner where it was necessary to take the street car. He paused there irresolutely. Then a relieving idea entered his mind and he walked away briskly.

"I'll not go home to dinner," he thought. I'll make her uneasy. I'll let her know beforehand that something is wrong. That's better than speaking out of a calm sky."

He ate alone in a little cheap restaurant. The food he ate he scarcely tasted. He was wondering how he would express himself, how to begin, just what and how much to say. He paid his check and walked out of the place unsatisfied.

He moved down the street staring at the pavement. He jostled people whom he failed to see. Stopping at the corner, he looked all about him, somewhat wildly, almost as if he were hunted. Within a few feet of him a bar-room was lit up and men passed in and out. Very desperately, unprecedentedly, Rudy went in for stimulation. He ordered whiskey.

He drank the little glass poured out and dropped a ringing silver coin on the counter for another. He swallowed this and felt a glow suffusing to his blood from a vague interior centre. A spark of courage animated him. He called for more whiskey.

A warmth, pleasant, strengthening, assuring, was capturing his senses. He began to see clearly the counts of his indictment, his charges and his demands. He would assert his case elaborately, with each grievance expressed without restraint, and then exact a promise from her unconditionally. This Anna must be cut absolutely. This Hemmingway must never be seen in

their flat again. They would drop all these people that had nothing to do with the proper kind of a household. There would be no more card playing. There would be no more dancing. . . .

Rudy observed a tall man with whiskers standing near him. He stared at the fellow grimly. He pounded one fist on the bar.

"I've got a mandolin," he said. "It's in a c—closet. I'm going to take it out and play it, by God!"

He left the bar-room and hunted for his street car.

As he sat in the car no ebbing reduced his determination. But a certain softening entered his mood, a roseate suggestion influenced his thoughts. Old dreams, like ghosts newly corporate, moved in his fancy. He would achieve still that patriarchal presidence; he would be firm, yet wise, unyielding, yet gentle. The conductor helped him off at his street.

He had some difficulty with the door in his corridor. Inside, he reached out for the rack to hang up his hat, but the hall was dark and it dropped short of the hook; he heard it fall resiliently on the floor, but he passed on to the dining-room unmindful. A light was burning there. He saw no one as he looked about him.

He dropped into a chair at the table. His hand closed over a sheet of paper. He held it up, staring at it a moment. Something was written on it; he couldn't quite see; that didn't matter.

"Hello!" he yelled.

No one answered.

"Betty!" he called. "D'you hear me? Come here! I'm home, waitin' to say something to you. I'm the boss; do you hear me? Yes, *the Boss!* D'y'hear that? Where the devil are you? The Boss!"

The room was empty; sardonically, malevolently, madly, it echoed back the word he yelled with his fine delight. He said it again, he called it at his topmost voice, whilst his hand crumpled the note she had written him telling of her departure with Hemmingway.

# CHANGE

## By Sara Teasdale

REMEMBER me as I was then;
Turn from me now, but always see
The frail and shadowy girl who stood
At midnight by the flowering tree,
With eyes that love had made as bright
As the shaken stars of the summer night.

Turn from me now, but always hear
The muted laughter in the dew
Of that one year of youth we had,
The only youth we ever knew—
Turn from me now, or you will see
What other years have done to me.

# HAPPINESS

By Ben Hecht

I

HAVING betrayed her husband, broken all her vows, bartered her honour, Mrs. Henry Duncan experienced a bitter and peculiar sense of disappointment. She had expected a change, some flaming metamorphosis of soul. She had looked forward with a certain grim elation to some strange and piquant laceration of conscience, moods of intricate despairs, emotions of paradoxical intensities.

She sat now in the modest library of her home, her hands folded listlessly over an open book in her lap. She was the same Mrs. Henry Duncan. She was the same Alice. Four days had passed and no change yet. Mrs. Duncan had been reared upon the theory that the world was divided into two classes, people who sinned and people who did not sin. She was twenty-seven and had been married five years. Mrs. Duncan saluted the twenty-seven years of her past with a puzzled sigh, and closed the book in her lap in order that she might think more clearly.

People who sinned and people who did not sin, people who obeyed the laws of God and people who did not obey them; she had crossed the vast and mysterious gulf which yawns between these two divisions of the race. She had not been swept across it or hurled across it or dragged across it. The crossing had been a curious and deliberate business. For four years she had associated day after day with Henry Duncan. She did not include the first year of their marriage in her memories. She did not include it because in the light of the four years which followed, this first year became a difficult matter to fix in her thought—more and more difficult.

She had had illusions during this first year. Chief among them had been the illusion that good honest love between good honest husbands and wives endures unto the grave. Curious illusion. Love, considered as a quality which contributes a purpose and charm to life, which heightens the colour at the sight of another, which keeps one filled with delicious and meaningless dreams, had succumbed in Mrs. Henry Duncan at twenty-three. It had been an unreasonable death. She had awakened one morning and said to herself as she was doing her hair before her dressing-table that she no longer loved her husband. She had paused, a hair pin waiting in her fingers, and stared at herself in the mirror, bewildered.

No longer in love with Henry! What a shocking idea! And yet, come to think of it, she could not remember having been in love with him for at least the last four months. Had she ever been in love? What was love?

Sitting thus before her dressing-table mirror arranging her luxurious hair, Mrs. Duncan's pretty, almost girlish face became clouded then with a curious, emotionless sorrow. The raptures she had imagined that were to endure forever, the inexplicable excitements of the heart, the little thrills that certain thoughts brought to her—odd that she had not noted their absence before! Henry and she had become perfectly placid married folk. She might, indeed, have continued for years without ever having even thought of the fact if not for . . . for what?

Mrs. Duncan shook her head. It had been an accident. Most women perhaps went on without ever giving the matter a thought. But there had always been a strangely introspective strain in her. This probably accounted for everything.

II

BEFORE Mrs. Duncan had finished her *toilette* at the dressing-table that morning, she had become quite a philosopher. She had initiated herself into the vast masonic cult to which married women and married men silently and secretly belong. There are certain immortal truths which the members of this esoteric and world-wide sect are pledged to keep hidden from each other's eyes and from the eyes of the uninitiate. These truths are:

1. Marriage is a snare and a delusion.
2. Love is a delusion and a snare.
3. Marital affection, conjugal bliss, and matrimonial happiness are terms carefully fostered, deceptions carefully and cunningly carried on, for the more or less cosmic purpose of keeping the race alive.

Having become privy to these precepts of the inner shrine of domesticity, Mrs. Duncan arose from her dressing-table and went about her business with the same complacent precision which had always characterized her. There had been no change in her attitude toward Henry. Their affairs went on exactly as before. Their separate interests combined in the well-ordered routine of all contented and mildly affluent homes. Duncan presided during the day as head of a local branch of a large insurance company. Mrs. Duncan spent the day directing her household, paying calls, shopping, attending to certain regular social necessities, planning small dinner parties, having frocks fitted, reading now and then some novel which fell, by chance, into her way. And in the evenings Henry Duncan and his wife Alice sat in the same room, remained as a rule silent, thinking of the trifles which had come into their lives during the day, exchanging monosyllables, making comments concerning the activities of their friends, activities as open and placid as their own, and, now and then, indulging in argument.

These arguments which sometimes achieved the dignity of quarrels, were the high points in the lives of Duncan and his wife. Although neither could be said to look forward to them, to seize upon them with a curious greediness, to prolong them needlessly, or to start them unwisely, there was yet about these quarrels a certain fascinating quality. They were, however, too artificial to distract for long or disturb more than surfacely the souls of the Duncans.

For the purpose of real and vibrant quarrelling there must be a real and vibrant divergence of opinion, a real and vibrant conflict of ideals or ideas. The Duncans were, however, cast too much in the same mould to achieve such reality and vibrancy. They had both been born in the town in which they lived, a place of some seventy thousand people, an hour or so from New York. They had both attended the same church, inhaled the same sermons, built their purity and faith upon the same immortal rocks. They believed as if with one brain in the damnation of people who sinned and, what is more discouraging to domestic excitement than all else, in the unchangeable definitions of those things which constitute sin.

Thus Mrs. Duncan lived the four years, her precise prettiness maturing, her figure acquiring a sophistication not quite matronly. And in the Spring of the fourth year Mrs. Duncan experienced the unrest and became for the first time privy to another of the immortal truths emblazoned on the inner shrine of matrimony. This truth was that all married women at least once in their lives tire of their husbands, as do all husbands of their wives, and desire forthwith to be divorced and liberated.

## III

It was while attending an afternoon tea at the home of Mrs. George Hyler that Mrs. Duncan walked full upon this latest revelation.

Mrs. Hyler was a woman somewhat older, barely thirty, perhaps; a precise woman, a modest and virtuous wife, an entirely estimable and moral force in life. And yet, it was while gazing upon this woman that the revelation came to Mrs. Duncan. There were other women in the room, eight of them, all drinking tea, all talking—what? Nothing. Merely talking, as they merely lived. Animated husks of women, women without emotions, without dreams. Women who were no longer women, but institutions with rules and by-laws, with defined architectures and regulated hours. Women who were, in short, like herself.

Mrs. Duncan ceased smiling and stared earnestly out of the window of the Hyler home. She saw College Avenue with its old-fashioned red brick pavement, its square, well kept, solid houses on which the vines of many years' growth were beginning to bud. The air was clean and fresh. The sunlight bright and exhilarating. It was spring, a polite, wholesome, unmysterious spring. To the women in the Hyler home it meant polite, wholesome and unmysterious expenditures for hats and clothes, drives into the country while their husbands discoursed behind the steering wheel of new makes or tires.

"These women," Mrs. Duncan thought to herself as she stared earnestly into College Avenue, "are all like myself. They don't hate or love anything or anybody. They are all happily married. I wonder how many of them are thinking what I'm thinking?"

Mrs. Duncan was giving birth to an ego. It was an unfamiliar process and made her head feel light. All women give birth to egos at least once in their lives. The egos die. Mrs. Duncan's ego should have died as she walked from the Hyler home down the cool, vivid, lazy spring street. Instead it continued to live and wax strong on the peculiarly unfamiliar smells which greeted Mrs. Duncan's pretty nose, smells of grass and trees and air, and of the polite perfume which arose in apologetic whiffs from her blue Georgette *crêpe* gown as she walked. Mrs. Duncan, however, did not yet think of sin.

She arrived at her home curiously distracted. Her husband followed her by some twenty minutes. He was tired, unusually bored, unusually aloof. He kissed her. Mrs. Duncan kissed him. He took a bath. He arose and shaved. He came in and ate dinner. He said,

"We had a pretty lively day at the office. Six rather big contracts. Not bad, eh?"

Mrs. Duncan said,

"No, that's fine."

It was, on the whole, no different an evening, this one, than had been all the other evenings. Mrs. Duncan felt, on the whole, no chagrin over her husband's boredom or his silence. She preferred that he remain so.

Ennui is the most subtle and indefinable of all human poisons. It corrodes the heart, eats out the conscience, devours the soul, and yet manages more often than not to leave its victim entirely unchanged. Its action is as delicate and imperceptible as the action of time. It fades the spirit even as cunningly as age whitens the red of youth. But in some rare instances it breaks through on the surface and its victim, staring at himself as into a mirror, sees for the first time its ravagings as the disfigurements of some long latent disease.

Mrs. Duncan, toying idly with an undarned sock—she had achieved all the domestic virtues—thought to herself that she was bored, bored with life, tired of life, wearied of her own brain. Of a sudden the past four years presented themselves for her contemplation. Hollow, empty, meaningless years!

There was in Mrs. Duncan, as has been suggested, a mysterious faculty

of introspection. She had been educated upon the normal department-store classics which make up the curriculum of the high-schools. She had been taught to obey, to reverence, to pray and to worship, to believe implicitly that certain things were right and their opposites wrong. She had been taught to believe that certain kinds of writing, of statuary, of people, of thoughts and of actions were indecent and conducive of evil.

Now, in her twenty-seventh year she believed what she had been taught to believe. She experienced no radicalizing of ideas, no revolution of standards. She had always been precise and proper, from her feet to her imagination. And now, from the bastile of her manifold virtues she gazed out upon the forbidden land. From the pinnacles of her morality she cast an eye across the gulf which reached to the broad and easy roads of another world—a world in which people suffered and joyed, sinned and were damned. A world, in short, containing a strange and unfamiliar folk whose souls were torn from morning till night with strange and unfamiliar emotions.

## IV

It was two weeks after this night that Mrs. Duncan encountered Edgar Kendall Brown. He was a tall man with a shock of curly brown hair and a rugged face. He came to the small city from New York to lecture for four nights at the Metropolitan Theatre, which faced Monument Square, on "The Relation of the Drama to Life."

Mrs. Duncan and all the women whom Mrs. Duncan knew subscribed to the entire course of four lectures. They were to be given in the afternoon. Mrs. Duncan attended the first in company with her husband, whose office was several doors away. In the evening she again encountered Edgar Kendall Brown at the home of Mrs. Frank Currey, who had given a "reception" for the distinguished lecturer. Her husband was again at her side.

Returning to her home from the reception, Mrs. Duncan experienced the first torment which had ever come upon her spirit. She entered her house gasping. She could barely believe the thoughts which moved quite calmly enough in her brain. And, believing them, she sought with an automatic superficiality to dismiss them. They remained.

Mrs. Duncan's thoughts may be conjectured, in a general way. She had for two weeks been preparing herself for them. Like some hypochondriac nursing a vague ailment, Mrs. Duncan had nursed and coddled the unrest which had come into her. She had held long talks with herself. She had indulged in wild moments of philosophizing.

She had informed herself over and over again that the people who lived on the other side of the gulf did not live as she. Life to them was different. It was a wild, vivid thing full of unthinkable excitements, tortures, ecstasies.

The thoughts which were now in Mrs. Duncan's brain as she moved about preparing for the night, oblivious of her equally oblivious husband, were, however, of a more material and practical nature. Within ten minutes they had ceased to frighten her.

## V

The remainder of Mrs. Duncan's journey across the gulf was merely a problem in simple logic. It ended at five o'clock two afternoons later in the arms of the somewhat astounded Edgar Kendall Brown. Details are unnecessary. Time, place, manner, all these things are to the true connoisseur of psychology extraneous. Mr. Brown showed himself a philosopher and a gentleman. He neither offered to elope nor sought to prove with guileful questioning the past or present of his lady. He permitted himself but one abstract remark.

"You suffer," he said, "from a starved soul."

The minutiæ of such a relation as sprang up between Mrs. Duncan and Mr. Brown and endured for three days, might be the basis for another and differently purposed paper on psychology than this. On the fourth day Mr. Brown passed on to new worlds, promising fidelity and discretion. Mrs. Duncan returned to her home. Having betrayed her husband and bartered her honour, she sat, as has been revealed, with a peculiar and bitter sense of disappointment in her soul, a book closed in her lap and her mind touching agilely upon the inscrutable stuff of life.

She had done this dreadful and not to be whispered thing in the manner that one stretches and yawns as a relief from *ennui*. She had expected to become heaven knows what, but something, something vastly different than she had been—a sinner. Instead she was Mrs. Henry Duncan. If she was a sinner she was as yet unaware of it. Boredom, subtle and complete as ever, was settling again upon her heart, upon her thought, upon her life. In a dim way Mrs. Duncan knew that she had penetrated to another immortal truth which is perhaps emblazoned upon the shrine of Hell. The people who sin are no different to the people who do not sin, because sin is so different to virtue and outside the circuit court virtue is indistinguishable from sin.

The thing was, like the matter of her love and its death, merely another illusion gone. Beauty, passion, ecstasy—mere words which people bandied among themselves, too polite to admit that the Creator had overlooked these things in his creating.

Such was the cynicism which came to Mrs. Duncan. Such things, she told herself, existed only in the irresponsible and impractical fancies of the poets. It would be well if some truth-bringer were to arise and announce the fact. She did not, however, yearn for the rôle of truth-bringer. She smiled sadly to herself. She had crossed the gulf only to discover there was no gulf or, at least, that the world was just the same on the other side as on the side where she had lived for twenty-seven years. And she had, she told herself wistfully, felt for a number of moments, a curious, wild and unreasoning affection for Edgar Kendall Brown.

Mrs. Duncan rose from the chair in the modest library of her home and walked sedately into the kitchen. She was supervising the manufacture of a cake for her husband. He had remarked the evening previous that he would like a change of dessert. They had been having canned peaches. Mrs. Duncan entered the kitchen, spoke briefly to the kitchen maid, and then suddenly put her hand to her mouth.

"What if Henry knew?"

The thought flashed unbidden through her brain. She had been careful, circumspect. Mr. Brown was, to boot, a gentleman and a lecturer. But nevertheless what if, through some unforeseen oversight, Henry discovered what had happened? Curious thought! Wild conjecture! A shot of pain transfixed Mrs. Duncan for an instant and left her white and smiling.

"Henry must never know! It would kill him. He might kill her. It would ruin their lives. There was no doubt of this. She must, at all costs, be careful, cautious, cunning.

Mrs. Duncan had not given this a thought before, this matter of being careful and cunning. Now, however, she gave it a number of thoughts. She grew excited thinking about it. She started humming a song as she moved about, her brain already busy with odd plans.

He must never suspect. She would have to divert him, to keep his mind from ever dwelling upon such a possibility.

Mrs. Duncan, flushed and strangely elated, returned to her modest library. Here she could think more clearly.

The boredum, the *ennui* which had returned to her less than a half hour ago, had vanished. There was, in her eyes, a light, a gleam in fact. Swiftly Mrs. Duncan went over sundry methods

of deception. By some process of psychology which will not be here elaborated, Mrs. Duncan, as she meditated, gradually envisaged Henry Duncan, her husband, as a creature of subtle penetrations, as a reader of complex thoughts. He became in her mind endowed with super-cunning powers of super-cunning psychology. He became one who would fasten upon the merest slip, the merest cough or blush as a signal of guilt.

In short, Henry Duncan became a man worthy of his wife's most tempered metal.

He arrived a half hour earlier than was his wont.

Mrs. Duncan paled as he entered the room. She paled still more when he switched on the light and gazed at her.

"You're . . . you're home so early. What's the matter?" she inquired.

She was conscious of a peculiar and intricate elation, the elation of fear, suspense, doubt.

"Nothing," said Duncan curtly.

Yes, he did speak curtly. There was no mistaking that.

He regarded her closely.

"You look flushed," he added. "Sick?"

Mrs. Duncan arose to her feet. A dizzy sensation passed over her. She approached her husband slowly. Her arms went around his neck. She spoke in a low tone.

"Oh, Henry, I do feel rather ill."

She kissed him. Duncan patted her shoulder perfunctorily.

"You'll be all right," he said. "Why, what's the matter? You're crying."

"Oh, nothing," answered Mrs. Duncan, "nothing at all. Kiss me, Henry, please."

He obeyed, wondering somewhat and smiling vaguely.

It was not for several days that Henry Duncan began to remark the change which had come upon his wife. She was, come to look at her, almost a different woman. He remembered with odd starts of emotion the girl he had married. She had been something like this, quick eager, moody, laughing, full of kisses and caresses. Henry Duncan ceased to marvel and accepted his good fortune. He came home one evening, it was almost summer, with a flower in his lapel. Upon another occasion he produced a box of candy.

"Women are strange," he said to an intimate. "You can't understand them. All I've got to say is that after five years of it. I find myself more happily married than ever. But it's all in getting a decent, faithful and unselfish women, I suppose."

## V

Mrs. Henry Duncan sits in the modest library of her home, between five or six each afternoon waiting for her husband. She seems younger than she seemed in the Spring. Her eyes are quick and lighted. Her friends, Mrs. Hyler and Mrs. Currey among others, have complimented her frequently upon her curious change.

"You get so much out of life," says the somewhat envious Mrs. Hyler.

"And you really are getting younger every day," chimes in the totally envious Mrs. Currey.

Little they know, thinks Mrs. Duncan, as she sits in the modest library of her home. Henry will be home soon. A shiver glides down Mrs. Duncan's spine and circles into her heart. Her cheeks pale. A peculiar and complicated emotion seizes her. Her eyes grow moist. She murmurs,

"Henry, poor Henry. He must never know. I must be careful. I must watch out."

Henry comes in. He has another flower in his coat lapel. It is summer. Mrs. Duncan rises and approaches him with a slow, cat-like tread. She bends her head to a side and gazes coquettishly at her husband. She laughs in her throat and extends her arms with an abrupt and graceful gesture. . . .

"Henry," she exclaims, "you haven't kissed me yet. . . ."

# THE WRONG ENDING

By L. M. Hussey

WHEN influencing unimaginative people, sentimentality, like all the other qualifying factors of human conduct, is prone to run to formula. Given a certain situation and the attitude of the usual sentimentalist can be accurately predicted. For example, be it presumed that this type of person hears of a case of wife-beating. In the forty-nine of fifty instances, tears will be dropped for the melancholy victim, for the outraged sanctity of the home, for the patient suffering of women. It would be the rare and imaginative sentimentalist who would dampen his cheek for the husband, on the grounds, let us say, that he had so lugubriously lost his precious sense of the milk of human kindness.

Bertram Roseboro was the ordinary, the common type of sentimentalist. Consequently, his lack of imagination, his inability to cope with an unforeseen development that twisted his prospects out of the proper groove, ruined for him a magnificently sentimental conception of self-sacrifice and nobility. It coloured with sadness his after life with the woman he didn't intend to marry.

When Bertram was aged six years, his family, who cherished a somewhat pale aristocracy, moved out of the city to a new home in the suburbs. This was done only in last extremity, when the neighbourhood of their city house had irretrievably degenerated. On leaving, Bertram's mother shed tears, for the place from which she was departing had been occupied by her husband's family even before the time when Benjamin Franklin, according to Clemens, turned the not at all difficult trick of entering Philadelphia with his pockets stuffed full of rolls. It was said that Franklin first promulgated some of his maxims in the drawing room of that house.

Bertram had every reason to remember his first day in their new home. The dwelling was centrally located on a wide lawn that merged into a woods at the rear. Along one side a tall hedge separated the grounds purchased by Bertram's father from those of their neighbour. The woods, belonging to both, were unfenced.

No sooner was the little Bertram liberated in this domain, than he galloped back toward the concealing underbrush, cherishing an instantly conceived plan of romantic exploration. Snapping twigs, he tore into the bushes, like a stag hunting cover. He emerged upon a path. His breath was coming in staccato gasps. And before him he saw a little girl, dressed in white, cool and demure, like a fairy.

Young Bertram was startled, as by an apparition. He stopped abruptly, staring at the little girl, who observed him calmly. She wore several braids of pig-tails, of which he did not approve. And he considered her face too pale and the coinage of her features too delicate. Even at that age, as subsequently, Bertram was disposed to the more flamboyant feminine.

They stood a few minutes in silent appraisement.

Bertram spoke first.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"My name is Judith," she said.

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm walking in my woods," answered the small Judith.

"These are not your woods!"

"That's not true! They are!"

Bertram, new to the place, was puzzled. Her unshaken assurance gave him pause. He turned and walked away from her with the design of consulting his mother.

She explained the situation to him.

"It must have been little Judith you met," she told him.

"I wanted to pull her pig-tails," said young Bertram.

"No, no!" his mother expostulated. "Little Judith is your neighbour. You must be kind and good to her."

This was the beginning of their acquaintance. From day to day Bertram met the small Judith and they were playmates together. She was not all that he wished of a companion, for her desires were too pallid. She could not adequately sustain the rôles devised for her by Bertram's more exuberant fancy. She often aroused him to irritation.

Yet he was seldom harsh. He remembered his mother's injunction and drew from his restraint a childish sense of nobility. Bertram's sentimentality was evidenced early.

Later, he and Judith attended the same primary school. They started together in the morning, and Bertram carried her books, slung over his back. In the afternoon he waited at the gate until she emerged and walked back with her. This intimacy was quickly noticed by the other children.

The boys began to tease Bertram. One afternoon five or six of them encountered him as he was walking home from school with the little Judith at his side. They stopped, hooted and grimaced at him; a pair of small satirists entered upon an extempore impersonation—one hung upon the arm of the other with an exaggerated femininity and a saccharine manner.

"Oh, Bert!" yelled another. "She's your wife!"

"Well, she is!" Bertram screamed back.

And finally they were permitted to pass on and Bertram was determined that, when he was old enough, he would marry Judith.

## II

THEIR intimacy was interrupted when Bertram was sent away to a preparatory school and Judith went to a girl's academy. They saw each other occasionally during holidays, but the relations between them were formal. The same condition was uninterrupted when Bertram, wavering first between art and jurisprudence, finally entered the law school of the University.

It was during the summer vacation of his second college year that Bertram picked up the threads of their early comradery.

They first played a little tennis together, but Judith lacked sufficient zest for the game and their application at it languished. Thereafter, they spent their time in company riding in Bertram's car or walking through the woods at twilight. Memories, coloured with sentiment, returned to Bertram.

He liked to meet Judith in the early evening: he liked to see her come through the hedge, dressed in white, as if wearing clothes of snow. Their greeting was always subdued, for about Judith was nothing flamboyant. To Bertram she seemed old and infinitely self-possessed. Their conversations were almost impersonal. Bertram was a little afraid of her.

But she had a charm for him. One evening, as they stood looking at the sunset, it captivated him unusually. Forgetful for a moment of his timidities, he took her hand. She turned her face to him with a mild expression of surprise. Then he kissed her.

"Why did you do that?" she asked.

A person given to more intellectual frankness than Bertram would have told her that he didn't know, and that would have been near enough to the truth. But Bertram, surprised by her query, stared at her a moment and lied.

"Because I'm in love with you, Judith," he said.

After his lips had formed these words

he found a peculiar pleasure in having uttered them. A strong impulse to elaborate possessed him and, in consequence, he delivered himself of a lengthy and lyric declaration. He re-captured Judith's hand and drew her close to him.

"Do you remember when I used to wait outside the school for you?" he asked.

"Yes. . . ."

"And do you remember the time when I said you were my wife?"

Judith, turning her face away a little, nodded.

"And you'll be my wife, won't you?"

She said "yes" in a very low voice. Bertram kissed her again. They walked back through the woods with the glow of the west behind them and their purple shadows moving in front. Bertram felt vastly romantic.

He retired that evening, persuading himself that he was immensely in love. Before he went to sleep, he spoke Judith's name aloud, several times, with a fervid enunciation. He assured himself that he was capable of a great and lasting emotion and that gave him a sense of pride. Judith's lymphatic response he glorified, translating it into the terms of an exquisite restraint.

The prospected marriage with Judith was an established thing when Bertram returned to the University in the Fall. No definite date had been set, for Bertram still had several years of his course to complete. He wrote her florid letters to which she replied with a subdued tenderness. Romantically he considered his the achievement of an epic love-affair.

But toward the close of his third year in the law school, Bertram, whose enthusiasm for Greenleaf On Evidence, Bishop on Marriage and Divorce, Kent on American Law, and the rest bound in calf-skin had been languishing for nearly a year, determined to quit these studies for another and more attractive pursuit. He decided to study art. And that purpose brought unforeseen and immensely significant factors into his life.

## III

THERE was much surprise, but little opposition, when he announced his purpose at home. In a few weeks he returned to his rooms in the city and enrolled at the Academy. He entered just in time to be a guest at the momentous *bal masque* given annually by the students.

With no great originality, Bertram went costumed as Punchinello. His first half-hour was rather uncomfortable. During that period he was attached to a thin girl with a dress bedazzled by eccentric spangles. As he danced with her he morosely depreciated her charms, believing, in his mind, that she was as meagre as a scarecrow in cold storage. As soon as possible, he disengaged himself and wandered off alone.

He walked through several unoccupied corridors and finally entered a room hung with part of a recent water-colour exhibition. Standing before the paintings, motionless, was a yellow-haired girl costumed after an antique fashion, the bustle and wide skirts of the middle eighteenth century. She turned when she heard Bertram's footsteps and dropped her eyes with a caricature of demureness. Bertram had never seen her before.

"I'm Pamela," she said.

By chance he understood her.

"But only for to-night . . ." she added, and laughed.

"What are you every day?"

"You'll have to find that out for yourself!"

"Why are you out here, all alone?" he asked her.

"I had to escape."

"Well!" exclaimed Bertram. "So did I!"

Her blue eyes widened. She impetuously seized Bertram's arm.

"That's fine!" she cried. "We're fellow sufferers!"

Her exuberance surprised Bertram, yet it pleased him. He took her back with him and they danced together. Her movements were rhythmic, like a

pulse. As they danced, Bertram questioned her.

"What is your name when you are not Pamela?" he asked.

She told him it was Amy.

"I intend to know you when you're Amy," he said.

"Of course!"

"Where will I be able to find you?"

"I'm here every day."

"A student? I'm one also."

She was surprised that she had not seen him. He explained his recent connection with the Academy. He asked her about the work she was doing and at his question she laughed.

"I'm here until I get tired of it," she said. "I don't know how soon that will be."

There was a quality in her irresponsible gaiety that gave delight to Bertram.

Later she vouchsafed him permission to take her home. On the way she told him she occupied a little apartment with two other girls, both of whom were studying the voice.

"They take it quite seriously," she said. "And that's an immense disadvantage."

The night was very crisp, and as Bertram drove his car up to her curb, his fingers tingled with the cold.

"The singers are both in bed," said Amy. "But you can come in a minute and get warm if you'll be quiet and discreet."

Bertram promised that, and she let him into the apartment.

The little sitting room into which she took him had a very oriental atmosphere —that air of the Orient which is to be procured, at no immense expense, from the Chinese shopkeepers who sell bad crockery. There were a half a dozen vases bearing Eastern figures in flat perspective. One wall was embellished with a narrow panel carrying the two-dimensional representation of a tree. The best thing in the room was a silk screen, embroidered with crimson flowers as red as Amy's lips. On a fragile bamboo table rested a glass globe in which several goldfish hung suspended in the liquid medium, like grotesque rubies sealed in a crystal.

Bertram and Amy stood together for a few minutes, talking in whispers, like two plotters in an intrigue. Bertram then took his hat to leave her. She touched his arm detainingly.

"I'm Amy now," she said, assuming once more the demurity of Pamela.

Bertram regarded her a second without comprehension.

"Ah!" he breathed at length, with understanding.

He kissed her.

As he went out, the warmth of her lips remained in his senses, and he had no thought of Judith.

But before he went to sleep the recollection of her returned. It was his nightly habit to think of her before he closed his eyes—a sentimental ceremony, a part of the paraphernalia of his love. As by a reflex, she came into his mind this night, and, almost at once, a vivid image of Amy accompanied her. Bertram knew an unpleasant surprise. No previous connection of Amy with Judith had occurred to him. Since he could not think of Judith without thinking of Amy, he did his best to close his mind and go to sleep.

The next day he met Amy at the Academy, rather late in the afternoon. Her yellow hair was disordered, like a carelessly dropped heap of gold thread. On one cheek she had a picturesque green smudge. She wore a loose yellow smock, kaleidoscopically streaked with colours.

"I paint myself quite as much as I do my study," she told him.

"You're through for the day?" he asked her.

"Yes."

"Then suppose you take supper with me. That is, if you've nothing else on hand."

"No, I have nothing else to do. For the most part the students here are so short of money that dinner invitations are as scarce as old maids' children."

They appointed a place of meeting. That supper initiated their companion-

ship. They spent some part of nearly every day together.

Amy knew a dozen or two of eccentric people and she made Bertram acquainted with them. He met girls who wore bobbed hair and young men who were writing plays. He met the vocalists with whom Amy shared her apartment, but she adroitly extricated him before they had an opportunity to sing. Her comment on all these people was vivacious and a little sardonic. She sometimes shocked Bertram's sentimentalities, but her exuberance delighted him.

They went to all the plays together. Afterward, with a talent for mimicry, Amy caricatured the vagaries of the actresses they had seen. When he parted from her late in the evening, as a rite that seemed quite natural, he kissed her.

Although it took him no more than two hours to make the run in his car, Bertram was so taken up with these activities that he had not gone home at the week-end for three weeks. He wrote that he was working with extraordinary assiduity, leaving the fact to explain his absence. But he received at last a reproachful letter from Judith that took him home on the fourth Sunday.

He quite singularly put her out of his mind, or, more precisely, he had forgotten her. Like the writing of a vanishing ink, the tracings of her on his memory had faded out during the weeks of his activities with Amy. As he prepared himself in the afternoon to call on her, he was startled by a realization of their relation. Judith was the girl he was pledged to marry!

He crossed the lawn that separated their houses, troubled with the thought. A moment after he had entered the house, Judith came in to him. She wore a dress of pale lavender that communicated a touch of subtle colour to her cheeks. Bertram embraced her almost awkwardly.

He tried to excuse himself for his absence and neglect. Judith listened to him in silence, neither accusing nor assenting. As he talked to her, pity came into Bertram's emotions. His offending, that previously he had not considered offending, was made manifest to him like a page of an unknown tongue shown luminous through translation. He watched Judith as he spoke, wondering that she did not blame him vociferously. Without question, that would have been Amy's course.

A shaft of sunlight came into the room, illuminating a square of the carpet like a lighted window.

"It's become very warm out," Judith said. "Suppose we take a little walk."

They went out doors. The trees were tenderly in leaf, with here and there a bare one, not yet bourgeoned, standing gaunt, like forgotten sentinels of the departed winter. They walked over the lawn, passed along the tall hedge, and entered the new green of the woods. Fresh smells moved their senses like caresses.

Bertram passed his arm through Judith's. Reminiscences returned to him in successive recollections, each presenting its separate figure, as if personified. He became tenderly conscious of that which he considered due to Judith.

He was aware that he did not love her. The pallor of her emotions had always disappointed him, even when they were children. But they had been companions for many years and he had led Judith into the belief that he loved her. He felt that he must never take that illusion from her.

The vision of a necessary sacrifice proportioned itself in his mind, solacing him with a comforting sense of nobility. He had a melancholy pleasure in the martyrdom he purposed. Bertram was determined to see Amy no more, and to marry Judith so soon as she would consent to a day. That would give some pain to Amy, no doubt, it would inevitably bring pain to him, but Judith would be kept in her belief of his affection. It almost seemed to Bertram that he was an actor in a familiar tragedy; he was, for he had met with just this situation in his readings.

He pressed Judith's arm and she turned her face to him.

"Judith," he said, "we must be married soon."

She made no comment, and he continued:

"We have waited a long while. I think we shouldn't delay any longer. I want you to be my wife."

He pressed her close to him, and bent over her face, receiving from her lips an acquiescent kiss. He drew away, with the feeling of having committed himself irrevocably. The melancholy, but pleasant, apprehension of martyrdom was strong in his senses. He had satisfied the accepted formula of his sentimentality.

## IV

THERE remained only the difficult business of acquainting Amy with his approaching marriage.

At first Bertram thought a letter would be expedient, but after a little consideration he rejected that idea as too brutal. He owed Amy a personal confession. He knew that he had been in fault for so long concealing his relations with Judith, and he felt that he might perhaps secure her forgiveness.

He had previously arranged to dine out with Amy on his return. He met her at the place of appointment, experiencing a start of pain at the sight of her. He was very quiet during their dinner.

"Could we be alone in your apartment this evening?" he asked her.

She gave him a surprised look.

"I have something that I must tell you where we can be in privacy," he said.

"Well!" she exclaimed.

And added, after a second:

"Yes—we can go home. The singers are not in this evening."

They did not linger over their supper, but went out after Bertram had settled with the waiter, and climbed into his car. As he drove through the streets, he was silent. His mind was occupied in formulating his confession.

She preceded him into the little oriental room. He waited until she was seated and then took a chair opposite her.

"You're as solemn as a congress of reformers!" she exclaimed laughing.

"Amy," he said, "there is something I must tell you. I should have told you before."

He paused before proceeding to the unbroken thread of his confession. The sweetly sad emotion of nobility that accompanied the renunciation he was about to make was strong in him.

"Long before I met you, Amy," he continued, "there was another girl . . . in fact, I knew her when I was a little boy. We went to school together. We used to play games together. We were neighbours. For some years, while both she and I were away at school, I saw very little of her. And then, when she returned, we took up our old intimacy. One day, as we were standing together, watching the sun set, I kissed her and told her . . . that I loved her. Forgive me, dear Amy! I should have told you this before. It was not fair—"

Breaking in upon his words, her laugh cascaded over her lips like the play of water down a mountain stream. She jumped up from her chair impetuously, and throwing her arms around him, kissed him reassuringly.

"You silly boy!" she exclaimed. "I'll forgive you for having been in love with another girl. You didn't have to tell me! That doesn't make any difference between us. And I'll marry you any time you say!"

So, overwhelmed with an unforeseen condition with which his talents were unable to cope, the sentimental Bertram's sacrificial intent was diverted into the wrong ending!

He married Amy within a month.

# LA RECOMPENSE

By Charles Dornier

DANS la nuit froide et brillante, Serge Pétrovitch se hâte, et, non moins vite, en lui se pressent des pensées, des images, des souvenirs. Les hautes maisons grillées enserrant la rue lui évoquent des préaux lointains de prisons où se replia et mûrit précocement sa jeunesse.

Ses pas qui martèlent le pavé gelé font lever et sonner dans sa mémoire des phrases de brochures, de journaux et de tribune. Il y a un mois seulement, par une soirée semblable, là-bas, à Paris, au sortir d'une réunion de farouches compagnons, il revenait avec son amie, dans la solitude éclairée des boulevards. Le visage de Sonia, pâle comme cette lune de janvier, so tournait vers le sien, et la chère voix promettait, dans la chambrette prochaine des Gobelins, viatique d'amour récompensant la mission de mort stoïquement acceptée, le don suprême de son corps vierge. Et depuis cette nuit, la première et la dernière, qui résumait si bien pour lui sa destinée de brève et tragique volupté. Serge, dont les jours étaient sacrifiés à la cause, sentait mieux, pour lui et les autres, le prix de la vie, et doutait parfois de la clarté de sa voix, de la vertu de ses principes, de la bonté de son but.

Il avait passé la frontière, au prix de quelles ruses et de quels dangers! Des amis, depuis huit jours, le cachaient à Moscou. Il sortait à peine quelques heures, la nuit.

Demain, à onze heures, heureusement, tout serait fini! Les deux bombes confiées tout à l'heure, dans chacune de ses poches, sous le manteau, battaient mollement son flanc. Il en tâta doucement le cône froid, écailleux, de pomme de pin. Il en jetterait une sous les pieds des chevaux, l'autre sous le coffre de la voiture. Il laisserait tomber avant, brusquement, la pèlerine dont les pans eussent gêné l'adresse et la force de son bras...

Une association bizarre lui montra, au même instant, entre les toits, la bande du ciel criblée d'étoiles, un dolman bleu rayé de boutons d'or, une masse sombre trouée de feu.

La lumière rouge d'une enseigne tombait sur le trottoir en coulée élargie de sang... Quel était donc cet ouvrier, tout à l'heure, face ardente et ravagée d'apôtre, qui revendiquait si éloquemment les droits du peuple à la beauté plus encore qu'au bien-être? Comme l'éloquence de ces prolétaires s'illustre naturellement de formes passionnées, colorées, et de formules fortes! Peut-être cette vie de misère est-elle le terreau nécessaire d'où jaillit le talent riche et droit d'un Gorki!...

Vrai! comme l'air est doux à respirer aux lèvres qui demain se fermeront pour toujours! Que la ville endormie est belle à contempler aux yeux demain clos à jamais! Que cette cloche qui sonne l'heure et ne tintera point à ses funérailles vibre purement dans l'oreille! Ces fils de télégraphe, que givre le gel, porteront demain aux confins de l'univers, aux rois, aux hommes, aux ennemis, aux frères, à Sonia, avec son nom le récit de son attentat! Hélas! combien faudra-t-il de ces lueurs tonnantes pour éclairer ce peuple aveugle, éveiller cette race de sourds! "Tiens! en voilà un qui rentre bien tard, comme moi!"

Une silhouette haute et large, emmitouflée de fourrures, avec des bottes qui sonnent haut et luisent de reflets

durs, jaillit d'un carrefour et s'engage devant lui dans la rue Krasnoïa, obscure et boueuse. Une canne à poignée brillante joue à sa main droite. Quelque aristocrate jouisseur qui sort d'une débauche avec quelque maîtresse secrète! Il suit la gauche des maisons et l'on ne voit plus de lui, sur le bord de la chaussée, que son ombre coupée et fuyante. Mais voici que, derrière cette ombre, deux autres, plus courtes, glissent. Serge presse, en l'étouffant, son pas. Les ombres soudain n'en font qu'une, nouée, monstrueuse, convulsive.

"A moi!" clame une voix sourde, et Serge, tirant son revolver, se précipite et voit le monsieur aux fourrures qui se débat, à demi-étranglé entre-deux voyous hirsutes. Les malandrins, au bruit de sa course, lâchent leur proie, et devant l'arme qui brille au poing du jeune homme, replongent dans l'ombre, au ras des maisons, s'évanouissent.

L'homme, le manteau arraché, découvrant des décorations, souffle bruyamment, et à mots entrecoupés, remercie: "Sans vous, c'en était fait de moi!... Par notre petit père le Tzar, je veux assurer ta fortune. Le comte Koratoff ne manque ni de pouvoir, ni de gratitude. Qui es-tu? Que fais-tue? Où vas-tu?"

Serge recule dans l'ombre, épouvanté. Par sot dévouement, il s'est jeté dans le piège! Se nommer, c'est dénoncer son but, trahir sa loi, ses amis, son devoir! Emu, il jette cette réponse: "Que vous importe! Je ne vous ai pas secouru pour de l'argent, une faveur, une place! Je ne savais pas, en vous sauvant, si vous étiez un prince ou un moujick!"

Mais l'autre s'obstine, le prend par le bras: "Non, ne te défends pas! tu es un brave, et je veux te prouver ma reconnaissance. Allons! ton nom, l'ami!"—"A quoi bon? Laisse-moi!"

Mais le comte, retombant déjà dans l'ivresse que l'émoi ?? l'attaque avait un instant dissipée, avec un doux rire bête, maintient Serge d'une poigne solide, et s'écrie: "Non, none je ne te lâche pas comme ça! Le poste de police au bout de la rue. Je t'y mène, et là, je saurai bien ton identité!" Et trouvant sa plaisanterie fine, il répète, plus hilare: "Au poste, allons! ouste, et plus vite que ca!"

Serge, s'affole. Il se voit déjà arrêté, découvert, fusillé stupidement, honteusement, inutilement. "C'est toi qui l'auras voulu! murmure-t-il. To gratitude sera ta perte, non la mienne!"

Docile, il se laisse mener, mais obliquant peu à peu dans l'ombre, doucement il remonte de sa droite libre son revolver jusqu'à la poitrine du comte, il lui lâche son coup de feu, et tandis que l'homme, foudroye, s'écroule, il s'enfuit hagard, dans la nuit, tenant dans ses deux poches, fruits de son crime, les deux bombes de salut, de vengeance et de gloire, cependant qu'au ciel la lune lui sourit, comme le pâle visage de Sonia.

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# ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

By Various Hands

Paris is wonderful! In spite of Big Bertha and all her worries, she is "carrying on," and although the métier of dressmaking sounds frivolous, it is doing its bit splendidly in keeping up the morale of the feminine part of the community, for clothes affect most women subtly but very surely, and are usually a key to temperament. Beautiful workmanship is a necessity now that there is such a shortage of the usual materials, and as a result very charming embroideries—usually in coarse wool—have made their appearance on the most successful frocks. These embroideries are generally in brilliant colourings, and seem as if they were trying to vie with the gorgeous hues of Joseph's historic coat.

Simple charmeuse frocks are particularly alluring when ornamented in this way, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that by wearing them we are not taking anything that could be used in manufacturing implements of war. One very effective model I've seen was made of biscuit-coloured silk, cut on very skimpy lines, but the effect of meanness in the amount of material employed was entirely done away with by the cleverly arranged circular lines of black wool cable stitching above and below the waist, and also by the attractive wool-work at the throat, cuffs, and hem. Silk is the supremely favoured material, chiefly because it is the most procurable, also it is warm in winter and cool in summer! One of the anomalies of war-time dressing is to be found in the silk frock trimmed with woollen fabric, which quite reverses the old order of things.

Fur, that was so popular as trimming last winter, promises to be beyond the reach of many of us this year, but plush is now found to be far more up to date, and looks charming in one of the neutral tints. A navy cloth coat and skirt that has put in its appearance has deep panels back and front, very much on the lines we have grown accustomed to, but the panels were weighted with a deep hem of thick grey plush, and it had a wide cape-like collar of the same—altogether very becoming. I can imagine nothing more alluring than this coat and skirt worn with one of the new soft grey velours hats with a wide brim.

The few autumn hats that have put in their appearance already have wider brims than is usual at this time of year, but they are vastly becoming even if they are inclined to become a little skittish when the autumn winds begin to blow; still, we no longer fly about in motors, so perhaps we can afford a head-dress that is not quite as secure as those we have got accustomed to in past years. Their colours are gorgeous! Every lovely shade seems to have been borrowed from the East, and our British dyers are very much to be congratulated on their wonderful successes in this direction. Most of us will be only too willing to show our appreciation in a practical manner by wearing the lovely shades they have achieved for us.

While so many are enjoying a short, but well-earned holiday the French dressmakers are turning out their autumn models, and this year they have let their genius have full rein in designing the loveliest of boudoir gowns and caps to be worn during those few stolen moments of relaxation. These rest frocks hold a far more important place in our wardrobe than heretofore, and if one can only wear frivolities for a few short hours in the day, then why not have them of the best possible?

Nasturtium red chiffon with cunningly arranged sash and ribbons of pale blue charmeuse was the keynote of one chef d'œuvre, but as it was merely a twist of chiffon cleverly draped with floating chiffon sleeves, it defies any very strict description. The under-dress was of yellow chiffon, carrying out the nasturtium idea, and when the wearer moved, one had occasional happy glimpses of

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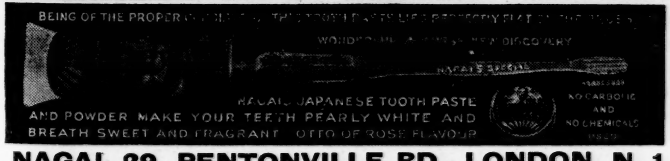

NAGAI JAPANESE TOOTH PASTE
AND POWDER MAKE YOUR TEETH PEARLY WHITE AND
BREATH SWEET AND FRAGRANT OTTO OF ROSE FLAVOUR
NO CARBOLIC AND NO CHEMICALS

PLEASE TRY ONE AND PROVE IT

***New Tooth Paste***
***New Tooth Powder***
***New Face Powder***
***Vanishing Cream***
***Shampoo*** *(6 packets)*
***Satchet*** *(4 packets)*
***Scent*** *(small bottle)*
**1/-** *each (postage 2d.)*

**NAGAI, 29, PENTONVILLE RD., LONDON, N. 1**

the golden yellow underneath. Yellow shoes and stockings were, of course, a necessity with such a frock, which is by courtesy a boudoir gown, but in reality charming enough to be worn in one's own home for dinner. Its colouring reminded one of a sunset in a field of ripe corn!

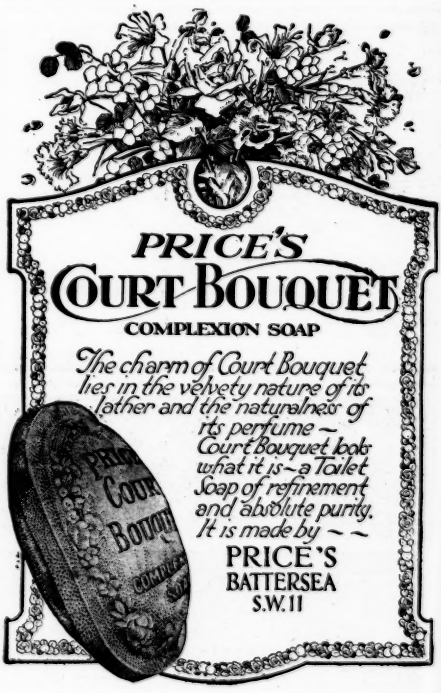
Petticoats have been abolished, or almost so, by stress of circumstances, not by inclination. There is no room for the dainty little bits of fluff or for the rustling silk slip in these days of skimpy war-time skirts; also our lingerie has to be so very much more simple than of yore. Gone are the gossamer laces and myriads of tucks, for gone also are many of the laundries, and of those that remain behind very few have either the skill or the time to give to such fripperies, so now we bow to the new order of things and have the plainest of crêpe-de-chine "dessous" with nothing to tear easily, and just a few ribbons which few of us can bear to part with; and at night we don silk pyjamas, cut usually on exactly the same lines as the men's, and not only the same lines, but the same size too, as it has been decreed that it is not only comfortable, but extremely "chic" to have a pyjama coat two or three sizes too big! Why? No one knows! But when once a woman has reasons for things half the charm is lost, and she knows this very well.

## A BOON TO THOSE WHO SHAVE

Among the many Shaving Soaps on the market, and their name is legion, none that we have so far come across possess the special properties of the Regina Shaving Stick, manufactured solely by Messrs. Price at their works at Battersea. It is emollient, readily causes a splendid lather in either hot or cold water, and does not dry quickly as so many of the other shaving soaps do. Moreover, it is fragrant, and its economy and price, only 1s. a stick, are undoubted. To those, therefore, such as officers and others, who desire a quick shave, we can strongly recommend this soap. It is obtainable at chemists throughout the kingdom, and is stocked by all the large stores.

## WAR WORK AND WRINKLES

War work is rather conducive to wrinkles. To start with, women are very earnest in whatever they undertake, and often concentrate their facial expression as well as their mind on the work in hand. This unnecessary strain results in wrinkled brows and ugly lines either side of the mouth from nose to chin. War work often means long hours in either an overheated atmosphere or exposure to all kinds of weather. All of which coarsen the skin and dry up the natural oil that is there. While no society woman to-day would dream of shelving her share of the burden, there is really no need for her to lose her beauty in helping "carry on." One can supply the deficiency with Mrs. Adair's Eastern Muscle Oil, which is nearer to the natural oil of the skin than any yet invented. It reaches the muscles and tissues and feeds the skin, thus preserving the elasticity and colour of youth. Mrs. Adair's address is 92, New Bond Street.


PRICE'S
COURT BOUQUET
COMPLEXION SOAP
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